Black History Month (cont. from pg 2)

Organ Donation and Transplantation Network. Blacks make up just 14% of the total population in Illinois, but 40% of those are waiting for a kidney.

State Senator Christopher Belt (D-Centreville) is an advocate of organ and tissue donation. He received a kidney transplant in 2010 at Barnes Jewish Hospital in St. Louis after years of high blood pressure (also known as hypertension), a leading cause of kidney failure. Sen. Belt had been battling high blood pressure since his mid-20s. In 1990 (when he was just 24), he was told that his kidneys showed signs of damage. Many of his family members also suffered from hypertension. He kept his high blood pressure under control, and he was fortunate that his kidneys continued to function where he did not need kidney dialysis until a year before his transplant.

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“The Black community is not as educated on transplants, it’s all about education,” said Sen. Belt. Even though Belt did not have a living kidney donor, he believes in living donation. Coincidently, Sen. Belt’s predecessor in the senate, Sen. James Clayborne, Jr., also received a kidney transplant.

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During National Donate Life Month in April, we celebrate the success of organ/tissue transplants for those who would not otherwise get a second chance at life. The events this April may look a little different than years past, but the message remains the same — please consider joining the Secretary of State’s Organ/Tissue Donor Registry to help shorten the transplant waiting list in Illinois. We have approximately 40,000 individuals waiting for organ transplants in Illinois. The vast majority of individuals are waiting for a kidney. In past years, the department has participated in numerous community events with Secretary of State Jesse White, including an annual press conference to launch April’s activities. We have shared displays of transplant stories at Driver Services facilities, planted trees to honor donors and contributed to numerous events across the state. This year, in an effort to limit in-person events, we have pivoted to a virtual message that includes a new campaign on the Life Goes On website.

Our office continued its annual tradition of unveiling a new donor awareness campaign each April with a commercial and a brochure featuring former Chicago White Sox player and broadcaster Ed “Farm” Farmer, a kidney recipient who died last year. Farmer, a teacher and supporter of organ and tissue donation, died in April 2020, at the age of 70 from Polycystic Kidney Disease (PKD). This is an inherited condition that also claimed the life of his mother. Farmer — who received a kidney transplant from his brother in 1991 — regularly joined Secretary White for donor awareness events and Chicago White Sox autograph signing sessions. Farmer, who had been a broadcaster for the Chicago White Sox, lived for nearly 30 years because of his gift.

Another way to raise awareness for the April donor awareness campaign is by having Driver Services facility employees wear Life Goes On polo shirts. Customers who see staff dressed in the coordinating shirts with the eye-catching Life Goes On logo may be encouraged to register. Staff also attended a refresh presenter about organ and tissue donation, where they learned new information and to ask questions about the program. Facilities received colorful Life Goes On flags to display. Many will fly the Flags for National Blue and Green Day. The White Sox were also featured during the campaign.

Ed Farmer was an All-Star relief pitcher and the radio voice of the Chicago White Sox. He needed a kidney, and thanks to a lifesaving gift from a donor, he lived nearly 30 more years. Join the registry today.

Like us @JesseWhiteSOS @ildonorprogram
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April puts donation in the spotlight

Organ/Tissue Donor Program coordinator Margaret Pearson addresses York High School donor education students in Elmwood Park in March. Margaret presented donor classroom presentations for two days with Leah Gleason, whose daughter, Lucy, a liver transplant recipient, graduated from York.

April puts donation in the spotlight

Margaret Pearson (suburban Chicago) mpearson@ilsos.gov
Laughter is good for the heart!

Angelique Marseille (Chicago, south suburban) amarseille@ilsos.gov
A living donor can donate a section of the small intestine.

Kevin Kohnke (central Illinois) kkohnke@ilsos.gov
The liver is a very large and heavy organ (about 3.5 lbs.) that regenerates in both the donor and recipient if a section is removed from a living donor and transplanted.

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Organ/Tissue Donor Program coordinator Margaret Pearson
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Redtail Funding
School driver’s education students in Elmhurst via zoom in March. Margaret presented donor classroom presentations for two days with Leah Gleason, whose daughter, Lucy, a liver transplant recipient, graduated from York.

Secretary of State Jesse White • Spring 2021

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The kidneys are a pair of bean-shaped organs with the job of filtering your blood. Kidneys are the size of an adult fist, located on either side of the spine, just below the rib cage.

What do kidneys look like and where are they located?

The kidneys are a pair of bean-shaped organs with the job of filtering your blood. Kidneys are the size of an adult fist, located on either side of the spine, just below the rib cage.

What exactly do the kidneys do?

They accomplish a variety of tasks including: removing waste and excess fluid from the body by filtering the blood, controlling red blood cell production, and helping to regulate blood pressure, calcium and potassium. Several times each day, the blood in your body passes through your kidneys.

What can affect kidney function?

- **Diabetes** — This is the leading cause of kidney disease.
- **High blood pressure (also called hypertension)** — This is the second leading cause of kidney disease.
- **Polycystic kidney disease (PKD)** — The most common genetic kidney disease.
- **Kidney stones and congenital diseases** — These conditions, as well as other underlying conditions, such as obesity, smoking, and over-the-counter painkillers, illegal drug use, family history of kidney disease, age, and ethnicity can each affect kidney health.

Many patients will opt for a kidney transplant if doctors think that is the best option for returning the patient to a normal life.

### Black History Month in Illinois

**Notably, two Black female transplant surgeons specializing in the field of organ and tissue transplantation have paved the way for others, and are renowned for their medical contributions.**

- **Dr. Velma P. Scantlebury-White**, MD, was the first Black female transplant surgeon. In her role as director of the African American Transplant Access Program (AATAP) at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Dr. Simpson focuses on dispelling myths and addressing patient distrust of transplantation, and medicine in general, within the Black community. The program encourages cultural competency, health literacy and offers psychological support to minorities.

### National Kidney Month observed

National Kidney Month is about educating the community about what keeps your kidneys healthy, as well as understanding kidney disease and its effect on the body. Millions of Americans suffer from kidney disease, and many are unaware they have it. It could be related to genetics or underlying health conditions, such as diabetes, obesity and high blood pressure. The National Kidney Foundation of Illinois (NKFIC) works with healthcare professionals to improve the lives of those affected by kidney disease. They offer free screenings to detect kidney disease at early stages and help patients understand how to take care of their kidneys. The organization’s Kidney Mobile is the first of its kind to travel throughout the state, screening individuals for kidney disease markers.

In celebration of World Kidney Day on March 11, NKFIC hosted a virtual event with speakers, presentations, tips for keeping kidneys disease-free, and a healthy, make-it-yourself meal and cooking demonstration.

"World Kidney Day is like the Super Bowl for our organization and kidney patients all over the country," said Jacqueline Burgess-Bishop, FACN, and CEO of the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois. This is one of my favorite months of the year to lead our amazing team and our partners as we continue to raise awareness about the importance of kidney health and increase awareness of kidney disease and its precursors. At the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois, we are celebrating with a virtual lunch and learn session. Experts in nutrition, nephrology, exercise and organ donation will share updates and demonstrations with hundreds of folks from across the state."

The reality is that African Americans suffer from kidney failure at three times the rate of whites, according to the National Foundation of Kidney. They make up 35% of all patients receiving dialysis for kidney failure, despite making up around 13% of the national population. Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis are also among the leading causes of death in African Americans between 45 and 64 years old, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"Because my donor, Milton, said yes to organ donation, I have had the opportunity to see my daughter, Olivia, grow into a wonderful young woman, meet my grandchild, spend time with my family, and hopefully make a difference for others who wait for their gift just like I did," said Fox. Every day I wake up feeling grateful for this precious gift of a lifesaving transplant, and that I realized a new path for my life — advocating for organ donation and educating about kidney disease."

In 2018, Monica participated in the Transplant Games of America, an Olympic-style athletic competition held every two years. Monica stresses the importance of registering as a donor and making your wishes known to family, as her donor did.
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Living Kidney Donation vs. Deceased Donation — Patients can be on the national transplant waiting list for a deceased donor kidney, or they can accept a kidney from a living donor. Those from living donors may last longer — on average 15-20 years — than those from deceased donors that last about 13 years.

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