



## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contacts: Lauren McDonnell  
GolinHarris  
312.729.4233  
[lmcdonnell@golinharris.com](mailto:lmcdonnell@golinharris.com)

David Fleming  
Donate Life America  
804.782.4920  
[dfleming@donatelife.net](mailto:dfleming@donatelife.net)

### **Number of Americans Willing to Donate Organs Rises, But Still Not Keeping Pace with Need**

#### *Survey Reveals Pervasive Donation Myths*

**RICHMOND, Va. (April 5, 2010)** – According to a new survey by Donate Life America, 43 percent of people are undecided, reluctant or do not wish to have their organs and tissue donated after their deaths. While an improvement over findings from a similar survey last year in which 50 percent reported the same, the statistic illustrates a critical need to continue to increase the level of support for organ donation to save the lives of the more than 105,000 adults and children on the transplant waiting list in the U.S., an average 18 of whom die each day waiting.

The survey uncovered reasons for registering and not registering. Among respondents who report being registered donors, the reason provided by more than half (53 percent) is to help others in need. For the undecided, reluctant or those who do not wish to have their organs and tissue donated, the most common reasons were not being sure they'd be acceptable donors (19 percent), haven't decided (15 percent) and want to keep their organs and be buried whole (8 percent).

"We are encouraged by the increased willingness of Americans to register as donors," says Donate Life America Chair Helen Bottenfield. "With the huge and growing need for organs, our hope is to save the greatest possible number of lives." April is National Donate Life month and

Donate Life America is encouraging people to visit [www.donatelife.net](http://www.donatelife.net) or [www.facebook.com/donatelife](http://www.facebook.com/donatelife) to learn more and to register.

The online survey of 5,100 U.S. adults, which was supported by Astellas Pharma US, Inc., also uncovered some pervasive myths regarding donation. For example, the majority (52 percent) of respondents were open to the idea that doctors may not try as hard to save their lives if their wish to be organ donors is known, and 61 percent are open to the idea that it is possible for a brain dead person to recover from his or her injuries. In addition, 8 percent believe that organ or tissue donation is against their religion.

“It’s important for people to know the facts,” says David Fleming, president and CEO, Donate Life America. “For health professionals, the number one priority is always to save the lives of their patients, and only after death is organ and tissue donation considered. While you can recover from comas, brain death is permanent, irreparable. And, there are no known religions in the U.S. with a position against donation; rather, all major religions support organ donation as one of the highest expressions of compassion and generosity.”

### **The Media and Donation**

Past research has found that the mass media may be partly to blame for misperceptions about organ donation. However, the survey points to a possible positive effect from the recently cancelled TV drama “Three Rivers,” a medical show that aired on CBS during the fall 2009 season and featured organ transplants through three points of view: the doctors, the donors and the recipients. Twelve percent of survey respondents had watched at least one episode, and of these, 58 percent said it made them feel more positive toward organ or tissue donation while only 2 percent said it made them feel more negative. “That means the show led nearly 7 percent of Americans to feel more positive toward donation. And, the survey showed a 6 percent overall increase over the past year in the number of people interested in being donors, so there may be a correlation,” said Fleming. To encourage the entertainment industry to be part of the solution and not the problem, Donate Life Hollywood will host its second annual Film Festival encouraging accurate and inspiring storylines June 11-12.

Additional survey findings include:

- More than three-fourths of adults (78 percent) correctly realize there are more people who need organ transplants in the U.S. than the number of donated organs available.
- 61 percent of adults would donate the organs or tissue of a family member if they died suddenly without indicating their wishes.
- The number of African Americans who wish to donate all their organs and tissue has increased to 41 percent versus 31 percent in 2009 – encouraging news as African Americans comprise nearly 35 percent of the national kidney transplant waiting list.
- Most adults (61 percent) believe TV shows and movies have a public responsibility to portray organ and tissue donation and transplantation in an accurate way.

### **About the Survey**

The survey was fielded through Survey Sampling International, one of the largest providers of online panels in the U.S., during January 2010 on behalf of Donate Life America. The online survey of 5,100 U.S. adults included a sample size of 100 in each state plus the District of Columbia. The aggregated nationwide data was weighted to reflect the relative proportion of the U.S. adult population in each state. The sample was controlled to match the U.S. population as a whole on age, gender, education, income and ethnicity.

### **About Donate Life America**

Donate Life America is a non-for-profit alliance of national organizations and state teams across the United States, serving as a national voice and inspiring all people to save enhance lives through organ, eye and tissue donation. For more information, visit [www.donatelife.net](http://www.donatelife.net) [www.facebook.com/donatelife](http://www.facebook.com/donatelife).

### **About Astellas**

Astellas is a recognized leader in transplantation and has been committed to the field of immunology for more than 20 years. Dedicated to supporting the advancement of care for patients, Astellas continues to build upon its legacy and leadership in transplantation by investing in ongoing clinical research and new product development.

Astellas Pharma US, Inc., located in Deerfield, Illinois, is a U.S. affiliate of Tokyo-based Astellas Pharma Inc. Astellas is a pharmaceutical company dedicated to “*Changing tomorrow*” by improving the health of people around the world through innovative and reliable pharmaceutical products. The organization is committed to becoming a global category leader in focused areas by combining outstanding R&D and marketing capabilities. In the US, Astellas markets products in the areas of Anti-Infectives, Cardiovascular, Dermatology, Neuroscience, Transplant and Urology. For more information about Astellas Pharma US, Inc., please visit our Web site at [www.astellas.us](http://www.astellas.us) or [www.AstellasTransplant.com](http://www.AstellasTransplant.com).

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