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Donor Alliance Releases Research Examining Public Perception of Organ, Eye and Tissue Donation in Colorado Communities with Lower Donor Designation Rates

In an effort to save more lives, Donor Alliance commits to busting myths surrounding donation and transplantation in 2012

Denver—April 5, 2012—Donor Alliance, the federally-designated, non-profit organ procurement organization and American Association of Tissue Banks (AATB) accredited tissue bank serving Colorado and Wyoming today announced results from a Colorado initiative designed to study the public's perception of organ, eye and tissue donation. The two-part survey aimed to increase knowledge and overall awareness about reasons people don't register to be organ, eye and tissue donors in the state. The study results were released in conjunction with National Donate Life Month, which honors the generosity of organ, eye and tissue donors and their families and commemorates all transplant recipients in the United States.

During the fall of 2011, Donor Alliance executed a four-month long, multi-layered marketing and PR campaign in previously identified zip codes in Denver, Aurora and Pueblo that had lower donor designation rates and overall support of donation. The campaign included reaching out to residents with radio, television, public transportation, door hanger and movie theater advertising, educational outreach in churches and schools, editorials in community newspapers and more. Results showed that targeted education and awareness-building activities led to increased registration of organ, eye and tissue donors by 4 percent overall. The survey also showed that many people continue to believe myths surrounding organ, eye and tissue donation.

"Colorado has one of the highest donor designation rates in the country. However, National Donate Life Month reminds us that until every patient in need can receive the transplant they require, our work is not done," said Sue Dunn, president and CEO of Donor Alliance. "This research gave us valuable data about the public's perception of organ, eye and tissue donation that we can use to refine our public outreach programs and continue to encourage higher rates of donor designation."

Two surveys were conducted independently by Corona Insights and issued to separate households in the targeted areas over a seven-month period. Key findings included:

- *Donor registration increased by 4 percent overall.* Notably, in Denver ZIP codes and among residents 65 or older there was an 11 percent increase. Aurora was unchanged and Pueblo saw a decrease of 3 percent in people registered.



- *Overall, 5 percent more residents shared their donation wishes with their families following the campaign.* There was particular growth in this category amongst several demographics: Pueblo residents (10 percent), 65 and older (12 percent) and non-donors (19 percent).
- *Myths about donation still persist.* 45 percent of respondents do not know if their religion supports donation, 32 percent do not know if they can be a donor in spite of existing health conditions and 21 percent don't know if being a donor would cost their family money.
- *Changes in reasons for not becoming donors.* Prior to the community campaign, age and health were the primary reasons cited for choosing not to be a donor (42 percent), followed closely by respondents stating they hadn't considered the topic (36 percent). In the post survey respondents citing age and health reasons dropped (32 percent) and respondents claiming not to have thought about becoming donors dropped as well, but became the most cited reason, (35 percent).

“Many Coloradans continue to believe myths about donation, which prevent them from registering to be donors,” said Dunn. “This year we are executing a campaign to educate Colorado residents on the truths of donation. Using research, news items, advertising, social media outreach and educational programs in local schools, we will encourage the community not to let myths stand in the way of saving lives.”

Join the 67 percent of Coloradans who have registered to be organ, eye and tissue donors. For more information about organ and tissue donation, please visit DonorAlliance.org. To register to be an organ and tissue donor, please visit DonateLifeColorado.org, DonateLifeWyoming.org or call 303-329-4747 for more information.

About Donor Alliance

Donor Alliance is the federally-designated, non-profit organ procurement organization and an American Association of Tissue Banks (AATB) accredited tissue bank serving Colorado and most of Wyoming. As a recognized leader in facilitating the donation and recovery of transplantable organs and tissues, Donor Alliance's mission is to save lives through organ and tissue donation and transplantation. To achieve this mission, Donor Alliance employs an effective family approach and recovery programs in more than 100 hospitals. Donor Alliance also inspires the public to register as organ and tissue donors through community partnerships, public outreach and education campaigns throughout its donation service area. For more information visit the Donor Alliance [website](#), or the [Donate Life Colorado](#) or [Donate Life Wyoming](#) Facebook pages.

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