



Gift of Life Donor Program Overview

Gift of Life Donor Program, founded in 1974 and headquartered in Philadelphia, is the largest organ procurement organization (OPO) in the United States, working 24/7 to coordinate the recovery of precious organs and tissues from deceased donors to save and heal lives. Gift of Life is the non-profit, federally-designated OPO serving 11.3 million people across the eastern half of Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and Delaware.

Thanks to the generosity of its community, Gift of Life has coordinated 14,196 donors and 39,469 organs for transplant, ***the most of any OPO in the country*** since the start of our national donation system in 1988. Overall, Gift of Life has coordinated more than 59,000 organs and more than two million tissue transplants since its founding.

Gift of Life leads the nation in providing kidneys – ***the most-needed organ for transplant*** -- with 991 transplanted in 2023 bringing its total number to 20,825, which is the ***most kidneys for transplant overall in U.S. history***. A half million people in the U.S. are suffering from End-Stage Renal Disease, with 90 percent of transplant waitlist patients in the nation needing a kidney transplant.

Gift of Life works in partnership with the 126 acute care hospitals and 12 transplant centers in its designated service area as well as hundreds of transplant centers throughout the country, to provide the most comprehensive array of services available in the U.S. to the donation and transplantation community. Gift of Life ranks in Tier 1 of CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) OPO donation and transplant performance metrics.

The need for more registered donors is one of this country's critical public health issues. Currently, there are more than 100,000 children and adults in the U.S. who need an organ transplant to survive, with an average of 17 people dying each day waiting. Just one organ donor can save up to eight lives, and one tissue donor can transform the lives of about 100 others.

Gift of Life Donor Program is recognized internationally for its expertise, scholarship, innovation and leadership in the field of organ and tissue donation.

Gift of Life continues to expand the broadest variety of services of any OPO in the U.S. as part of its 50-year commitment to serve the donation and transplantation community. Services include:

- Screening and coordinating the importation and transportation of organs for transplant from other areas of the country for patients in our community.

- Implementing organ preservation technologies to expand the number of organs available for life-saving transplants.
- Providing organ preservation, packaging, and transportation in support of living kidney donation.
- Creating Gift of Life Donor Care Center at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, the first intensive care unit in the Northeast U.S. exclusively for deceased organ donors. The Center, which opened in 2022, supports hospitals by freeing up ICU beds and critical care staff to care for seriously ill patients and expedites the donation process so that families can proceed with arrangements to honor their loved one.
- Partnering with research groups to advance transplantation science:
 - Providing more than 500 organs for research in 2023.
 - Partnering with the National Disease Research Interchange (NDRI) on the pediatric Genotype-Tissue Expression (GTEx) project funded by a grant from the National Institutes of Health to support critical research on disease processes and progression.
 - Partnering with researchers on xenotransplantation.
- Providing full-service tissue recovery.
- Providing its own eye bank for donor screening, cornea evaluation and placement for transplant (one of the few U.S. OPOs to do so).

Gift of Life’s strong commitment to the transplant community includes a “home away from home” to help ease the transplant journey for patients and their families. **Gift of Life Howie’s House**, which opened in 2011, provides affordable lodging, meals and supportive services to those who travel to Philadelphia for transplant-related care.

The **Gift of Life Institute**, an affiliate of Gift of Life, is the international leader in organ and tissue donation education observing the 20th anniversary since its founding in 2004. The Institute has trained more than 14,000 professionals from 33 countries.

Gift of Life Institute’s **Transplant Pregnancy Registry International (TPRI)** is the only research study in the world tracking the effects of pregnancy on transplant recipients and the effects of immunosuppressive medications on fertility and pregnancy outcomes. Many transplant recipients were warned not to attempt pregnancy in years past. TPRI has helped give organ recipients science-based information to achieve post-transplant parenthood through more than 34 years of expert research. Since 1991, TPRI has tracked 3,152 parents and 5,511 pregnancies, sharing information with countless transplant recipients and their healthcare teams making family planning decisions.

With ongoing advancements in transplantation, the overall need for organ donation grows as does the need for more registered donors. Currently, there are about 5,000 children and adults awaiting a life-saving transplant in Gift of Life’s region. Gift of Life urges everyone to discuss organ donation with loved ones to make their personal preferences known. Everyone has the potential to be a donor regardless of age, health or medical history. For more information and to sign up as a donor in less than one minute, visit www.donors1.org.

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