

News from the Wyoming Department of Health

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Organ Donors May Someday Save Lives

Signing up to be an organ and tissue donor is a generous way to perhaps someday help save or transform other lives, according to a Wyoming Department of Health representative.

“The easy act of marking “yes” when asked about organ and tissue donation on your driver’s license form can dramatically impact others’ lives,” said Cherame Serrano, Wyoming Cares/Wyoming Shares program manager with the Wyoming Department of Health. “One donor can help change up to eight lives through organ donation and help heal more than 100 people through tissue donation.”

Serrano said currently about 150 Wyoming residents are waiting for transplants.

Residents can check their licenses to see if they are included in the donor registry. Most Wyoming licenses have a small red heart symbol in the upper right hand area to indicate someone wishes to be a donor.

Wyoming remained 4th in the nation with 59.1 percent of individuals with driver licenses and ID cards joining the donor registry in 2011. “While it’s great that Wyoming has been in the top five for many years, we’d like to see the rate go even higher,” Serrano said.

How to become a designated organ donor in Wyoming:

- Sign up with the Wyoming Department of Transportation when you apply for or renew a driver’s license or ID card
- Register online at <http://www.donatelifewyoming.org/>
- Request and return a mail-in registration form. Forms can be requested by calling [307-777-3527](tel:307-777-3527) or by mail from Wyoming Cares/Wyoming Shares, 6101 Yellowstone Rd, Suite 420, Cheyenne, WY 82002.

Wyoming is a first person consent state, meaning that residents registering as donors are making an advanced directive to be honored at the time of death. “If you are eligible to be a donor, your family will be informed of your decision at the time of your death and will be asked to provide information about your history,” Serrano said.

“Organ, eye and tissue donation are considered only after you are deceased,” Serrano said. “If you are sick or injured, the top priority is to save your life.” There are no extra costs to the donor or the donor’s family for organ or tissue donation, and those wishing to only donate certain organs and/or tissue may list restrictions.

Serrano noted all major religions in the United States support organ, eye and tissue donation as an unselfish act of charity and an open casket funeral remains possible for organ, eye and tissue donors.

The Wyoming Department of Health’s Wyoming Cares/Wyoming Shares Program helps promote organ donation in the state, together with a number of partner organizations.

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