**Gift of Life Michigan talking points and fact sheet**

**2024 Data**

* Gift of Life Michigan helped 533 people become organ donors, which led to 1,119 organs being transplanted.
* 1,960 people gave the gift of tissue, breaking the record set in 2023 of 1,858.
* 206,456 individuals joined the Michigan Organ Donor Registry.
* The Check Your Heart Act took effect this tax season, inspiring 14,455 tax filers to join the Michigan Organ Donor Registry.
* May was a record-breaking month for tissue donation with 197 tissue donors helping to heal and improve the lives of others.
* Gift of Life Michigan’s free one-hour organ, eye and tissue donation education program, *All of Us,* was presented to 37,025students at 512 schools across the state.
* The Living Donor Tax Credit law was passed in November. The credit will help those who choose to donate a kidney or liver handle the costs associated with donation, including lost wages and medical bills. While Gift of Life Michigan is focused on deceased donation, we are very supportive and grateful to those who are generous to donate in life and supported the bill.
* Gift of Life made history in transplantation in 2024. Through its partnership with Ossium Health, a clinical-stage bioengineering company in San Francisco, a Michigan organ donor saved the life of a 68-year-old Flint woman. She needed an urgent bone marrow transplant to treat her leukemia. She was the first patient in the world to successfully receive marrow from a deceased donor.

**2023 Data**

* Gift of Life Michigan helped a record 578 people become organ donors and 1,858 give the gift of tissue.
* The 2023 figures represent a significant 25% increase in organ donors over the previous record set for Michigan in 2022. Gift of Life was one of 40 donation programs across the country to break records for organ donors.
* May set a record for 63 organ donors, 177 tissue donors and 167 organs transplanted in one month.
* The number of organs transplanted also increased from 1,052 in 2022 to 1,372. Across the nation, more than 43,000 organs were transplanted.
* African American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American communities are at higher risk for conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity that, left untreated, can lead to organ failure. Yet these populations are less likely to sign up as organ and tissue donors due to a variety of factors, including a mistrust of the medical system.
* About 65% of patients waiting for a kidney transplant in the U.S. are minorities, according to the Association of Organ Procurement Organizations.
* In Michigan, more than 2,400 patients are waiting for a transplant today. Of those, nearly 40% are either African American, Hispanic or of Middle Eastern descent.
* Nationally, as of 2022, 22% of the over 100,000 people waiting for an organ transplant in the United States are Black, yet only 13 percent of registered organ donors are from the Black community.

**Michigan Organ Donor Registry**

* One goal of Gift of Life Michigan is to inspire and motivate the public to register as organ, eye and tissue donors through education and community outreach.
* Gift of Life works with the Secretary of State to manage the Michigan Organ Donor Registry, a confidential database of registered donors. Gift of Life is responsible for maintaining the Donor Registry. With a close partnership with the Michigan Department of State, we work to help eligible Michiganders have the heart placed on their driver’s license or state ID. The heart indicates registered donor status.
* The need to grow the Donor Registry is urgent. More than 2,400 people were waiting for an organ transplant in Michigan.
* We know that 90% of adults support the concept of organ and tissue donation and we also know that 57% of Michigan adults, more than 4.6 million, have signed up on the Donor Registry through the Secretary of State or our website golm.org.

**Check Your Heart Act**

* Thanks to the Check Your Heart Act, 14,455 Michigan residents joined the Michigan Organ Donor Registry.
* The Check Your Heart Act was signed by Gov. Whitmer in July 2023.
* This adds the Michigan Organ Donor Registry to state income taxes, allowing residents to sign up as organ donors while completing their tax returns.
* The option to join the Donor Registry can be found on the Voluntary Contribution Form (Form 4642).
* [Press release.](https://giftoflifemichigan.org/blog/michigan-organ-donor-registry-question-added-to-state-income-tax-forms-in-2024)

**Check Your Heart campaign**

Gift of Life wants to add more Michigan adults to the Donor Registry.

* + That’s why we have launched the ***Check Your Heart*** campaign – the largest statewide registration drive in our 53-year history.
	+ The message is simple. You check your heart in two ways: First, by reaching into your wallet to check for the heart symbol on your ID. If it’s there, you are a donor! Thank you!
		- Now, tell your friends and family.
	+ If it’s not there, we hope you check your heart emotionally and join the Donor Registry.
* Ways to register:
	+ Most Michiganders register through the Secretary of State when they renew their driver’s license.
	+ You can also register on our website at **golm.org**.
	+ We are looking for workplace and community partners to help us expand the Donor Registry by sharing our registration link.
		- Michigan’s Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is now sending the link to register to residents who buy hunting and fishing licenses online. The DNR also includes information about the Donor Registry in its newsletter to employees.
		- Other businesses such as Rocket Mortgage, Michigan Humane and Old National Bank have also partnered with Gift of Life.
		- To register as a donor, visit GOLM.org/register
			* Information about the Workplace Partnership Program can be found at [golm.org/partners](https://giftoflifemichigan.org/who-we-serve/professionals/workplace-partners)

**National/General talking points**

* One organ donor can save up to eight lives.
* One tissue donor can heal an average of 75 patients with the potential of up to 125.
* One cornea donor can restore sight to two people.
* Nationally, there are more than 100,000 people waiting for an organ transplant.
* Seventeen people die each day in the United States waiting for an organ transplant.
* Only three in 1,000 people die in a way that allows for deceased organ donation.
	+ Patients must be in a hospital and on a ventilator.
	+ That’s why every donor registration counts.
* Anyone, regardless of age or medical history, can sign up on the Donor Registry.
* Myths and misconceptions about donation can prevent people from registering as donors. Messages to refute common misconceptions include:
	+ Your life always comes first. Doctors work hard to save every patient’s life.
	+ Organ, eye and tissue donation need not interfere with an open casket funeral.
	+ Most major religions support donation as a final act of generosity and compassion.
	+ Age does not necessarily rule out a person from becoming an organ or tissue donor. Gift of Life had a 101-year-old tissue donor in 2022; while rare, donors in their 90s have saved lives as organ donors.
	+ For a full list of facts, please visit the [Facts & FAQs page on our website.](https://giftoflifemichigan.org/about-donation/facts-faqs)

**ABOUT Gift of Life Michigan**

* Gift of Life Michigan is the state’s federally designated organ and tissue recovery program providing all services necessary for organ donation to occur. It works as the intermediary between families, hospitals and transplant centers to fulfill donation decisions for patients and their families.
* Gift of Life was founded in 1971, by five surgeons who represented the medical schools at the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Wayne State University and Henry Ford Hospital. It was initially known as the Transplantation Society of Michigan, and it began as a kidney donation program.
* The mission of Gift of Life is to **honor life through donation.**
* Since 1971, Gift of Life has honored the decisions of more than 10,000 organ donors and their families. It has also helped more than 25,000 tissue donors give their final gifts. Gift of Life began recovering tissue in 1988.
* Anyone, regardless of age or medical history, can sign up on the Michigan Organ Donor Registry.

**Leadership**

A Board of Directors governs Gift of Life Michigan, setting policies and overseeing all activity for the organization. Committees address issues ranging from histocompatibility to multiple-organ retrieval.

**Dorrie Dils,** President and CEO

Dorrie Dils is responsible for overall operations, management and compliance. She reports to the Gift of Life Governing Board of Directors.

**Sharon Bayliss,** VP, Administrative Services/CFO

Sharon Bayliss oversees all of Gift of Life's financial functions, administrative services and the human resources department.

**Kristin Delli Carpini**, VP, Performance Excellence

Kristin Delli Carpini oversees Gift of Life’s strategic planning process, business intelligence reporting and leads performance improvement efforts across all departments of the organization.

**Bruce Nicely,** VP, Donation Optimization

Bruce Nicely leads the clinical division’s strategic planning process, cultivates high-level relationships with partners to advance donation and represents Gift of Life at the regional and national levels.

**Jeff Patierno,** VP, Clinical Operations

Jeff Patierno oversees the implementation of the clinical division’s strategies, including the management of organ and tissue donor cases, as well as laboratory services.

**Jeffrey Wisniewski,** VP, Regulatory Compliance and General Counsel

Jeff Wisniewski oversees all of Gift of Life's internal legal and regulatory functions including contracts, the quality department and compliance with both regulatory bodies and the Uniform Anatomical Gift Law.

**Patrick Wells-O’Brien**, VP, Communications and External Relations

Patrick Wells-O'Brien oversees all of Gift of Life's community outreach efforts, internal and external communication, legislative relations, and donor family support.

To view full bios and the board, [please visit our website](https://giftoflifemichigan.org/about-us/leadership-team).

**Notes on Terminology**

* **Recovery vs. harvest:** Organ **recovery** is used nationwide, as a matter of accuracy, clarity and respect for organ donors and their families. Do not use the word **harvest**, as it is inaccurate and disrespectful to donors and their families.
* Similarly, use the phrase **deceased donor**, never cadaver or cadaveric donation. While **cadaver** has long been accepted medically, it is important to use terminology that is considerate of donor families and conveys to the public the respect and care that donors deserve. More people are making the life-saving decision to become living organ donors. Using **deceased donor** and **deceased donation** help to make a clear distinction between these types of donation.
* Death can occur in one of two ways: circulatory death, when the heart is no longer able to beat on its own, or brain death, which is the irreversible loss of function of the brain, including the brain stem. Use of the term life support can cause confusion when it comes to brain death. Brain death is final; it is not the same as a coma or persistent vegetative state. When death occurs, there is no form of support that can make that person live again. Organ donation can occur after a patient is declared dead. In that case, **mechanical** or **ventilated support** is necessary to supply blood and oxygen to the organs before they are recovered.
* **Mechanical ventilator vs life support**: Use “ventilator” as opposed to “life support” because life support could give the impression that the patient is still alive.
* **Authorize vs. consent:** Use authorize or authorization. It’s legally binding and gives explicit permission.
* **Heal vs. improved:** Improving implies that someone will make a full recovery or life may get better, which can’t be guaranteed.
* **Decision vs wish**: Using the term **wish** rather than **decision** implies that you are hopeful that you become a donor but that your choice is not final. Your decision takes precedence over your loved one’s wishes, which is why it is important to tell your family about your decision to help others.
* **Reimbursed vs compensated:** Less transactiveand does not imply selling, which is not what OPOs do.

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| **USE** | **DO NOT USE** |
| Authorize | Consent |
| Heal or transform | Improve or enhance |
| Decision | Wish |
| Mechanical ventilator or just ventilator | Life support |
| Reimburse | Compensate |
| Recover (Procure) | Harvest |