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NUMBER OF PATIENTS WHO DIE WAITING FOR KIDNEY TRANSPLANTS ON THE RISE

Study finds that nearly one out of every two people over the age of 60 will die while waiting to receive a kidney transplant

June 25, 2009, New Orleans, LA—A new study by the Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology found that 46 percent of patients age 60 and older presently waiting for a life-saving kidney transplant will die before receiving an organ from a deceased donor.

Jesse Schold, an Associate Instructor of Medicine at the University of Florida, analyzed the data of nearly 55,000 patients over age 60 that were on the U.S. waiting list for a kidney transplant from 1995 to 2007. Schold also found that African Americans on the national waiting list were more likely to die before receiving a kidney transplant.

“It is important to understand the dire need for people to register as organ and tissue donors especially among minorities, where the need is greater” said Jeanette Slakey, Executive Director of the Legacy Donor Foundation. “One donor can save 9 lives and enhance the lives of up to 50 more through organ and tissue donation.”

More than 50 percent of patients on Louisiana’s transplant waiting list are over the age of 50, and out of the 657 people waiting for a kidney transplant between the ages of 50 and 64, 429 are black.

According to Slakey, one of the most common myths amongst minorities is that organ donation is against their religion when in fact, all major religions approve of organ, eye and tissue donation, and even see it as an unselfish act of kindness.

The Legacy Donor Foundation has partnered with the Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency (LOPA) to form Donate Life Louisiana, a collaboration that aims to bring a cohesive face to organ donation education and awareness in Louisiana.

Louisiana’s total registry is currently 1.7 million names strong. Yet, last year alone nearly 150 patients in Louisiana died waiting or were too sick to receive an organ transplant. Donate Life Louisiana hopes to reach 50 percent of the state’s population (over 2.2 million people) as registered donors by 2014.

For more information on how to register as an organ donor, please visit www.donatelifeLA.org.

Donate Life Louisiana, collaboration between LOPA –Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency and the Legacy Donor Foundation, provides education and awareness programs to the citizens of Louisiana about organ and tissue donation.

Legacy Donor Foundation, Founded in 1999, the Legacy Donor Foundation (a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization) provides education and public awareness activities about organ donation. The Foundation seeks to increase donor registrations and foster informed family acceptance of the process.

LOPA is the only federally designated organ procurement organization for the state of Louisiana. The agency plays a vital role in educating the medical community and the general public about organ and tissue donation matters, working with families through the donation process, recovering donated organs and tissues and placing the organs and tissues for transplant.

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