

August 2023

UI HEALTH CARE ORGAN TRANSPLANT CENTER

August is National Minority Donor Awareness Month

August is National Minority Donor Awareness Month. It is an annual reminder, if we need one, that socioeconomically disadvantaged and marginalized populations face several barriers to timely organ transplantation. These include reduced access to preventive care, delayed visits to primary care physicians, late referrals to a nephrologist and from there numerous barriers to being transplanted including distance to a transplant center, longer time to being placed on the waiting list, and fewer blood type matched organs from deceased donors. Among the many ways that we can begin to address these disparities is by increasing awareness of the power of organ donation, both deceased and living among all communities including Black, Native American, and Hispanic populations. Transplant centers should partner with local dialysis units, with Organ Procurement Organizations, and organizations like Donate Life America to improve education about the benefits of organ transplantation, and to reduce any disincentives to both deceased and living organ donation, so that everyone benefits from increased donation rates.

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What Can I Do?

Below are some tips on ways to work on your health.

- Have regular checkups with your primary care provider (PCP). Follow your PCP's advice.
- Follow a healthy diet and work to maintain a healthy weight.
- Monitor your blood pressure often.
- Exercise often. The CDC recommends 150 minutes of cardiovascular exercise per week AND 2 days of muscle strengthening for optimal health.
- Drink more water and cut out sugary drinks or alcohol.
- Quit smoking and stay away from illegal drugs.

Did You Know?

People in the US tend to donate in proportion to their representation in the population. However, the need for transplant is disproportionately higher within minority communities.

- Racial/ethnic minority individuals make up nearly 60% of the current transplant waiting list.
- In 2022, 49% of transplanted individuals came from multicultural communities.
- African Americans are three times more likely than white Americans to have kidney failure.
- Transplants can be successful regardless of the ethnicity of the donor and recipient.

National Minority Organ Tissue Transplant Education Program

The National Minority Organ Tissue Transplant Education Program (MOTTEP) was founded in 1991 by Dr. Clive Callender. MOTTEP's mission to reduce the number of ethnic minority Americans in need of organ or tissue transplants through disease prevention and education. National Minority Donor Awareness Month works to improve quality of life, create a positive culture for donation, and bring awareness to transplantation. African American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Native American communities are the primary focus in the program.

Don't forget – our next Transplant Support Group will be on October 12th via Zoom! Details on how to join will be in next month's newsletter!

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