

For Immediate Release:
August 1, 2018

For More Information Contact:
Beth Kaufman

Jesse White Encourage Organ/Tissue Donation for National Minority Donor Awareness Week

Secretary of State Jesse White hosted National Minority Donor Awareness Week event “Wave Away the Waiting” to promote organ/tissue donation for multicultural communities. White was joined by donor recipients and families.

“We are working together to end the wait for those in need of organ donation,” said White. “Minorities are in great need of organ transplants, yet they donate at a lower rate. I encourage everyone to register to become an organ/tissue donor and help give the gift of life to someone in need.”

Nationally, minorities comprise 63 percent of the waiting list for organ transplants; however, this year they accounted for only 37 percent of those who donated organs, according to the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network.

According to the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network:

- Currently there are 1,576 African-Americans on the waiting list, but in 2017 only 150 African-Americans became donors.
- There are 876 Hispanic-Americans on the waiting list, but last year only 115 Hispanic-Americans became donors.
- There are 237 Asian-Americans on the waiting list, but only 29 Asian-Americans became organ donors in 2017.

In Illinois, 6.5 million people are registered as organ/tissue donors, yet there are approximately 4,700 people waiting for transplants. Minorities are disproportionately affected by illnesses such as hypertension and diabetes, which can lead to the need for dialysis or a kidney transplant, increasing the number of patients on the organ transplant waiting list, according to United Network for Organ Sharing. On Jan. 1, 2018 a new law spearheaded by White went into effect allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to register to become organ/tissue donors. So far, more than 30,000 teens have registered.

The event, which was held on the plaza of the James R. Thompson Center, where dozens of volunteers participated recognizes the awareness week, August 1-7. A registration table was available at the “Wave Away the Waiting” event for people to join the Secretary of State’s Organ/Tissue Donor Registry. In addition, the Jesse White Tumbling Team performed.

Illinoisans can register with the Secretary of State’s Organ/Tissue Donor Registry online at LifeGoesOn.com, by calling 1-800-210-2106 or by visiting their local Driver Services facility.