



Media Contact: Elizabeth Sell, 215-775-5523, SELL@aetna.com

Give the Gift of Life This Valentine's Day Aetna Supports National Donor Day

By Aetna President, Mark T. Bertolini



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This Valentine's Day (Feb. 14) is the 10th National Donor Day, an initiative supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that focuses on raising awareness of organ and tissue donation. Donor Day is the perfect opportunity to make a commitment that can improve the lives of as many as **50** people – becoming an organ and tissue donor.

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- **Charity Alert:** In 2009 Aetna and the Aetna Foundation awarded \$50,000 to support the National Kidney Registry.
- **Website of the Month:** www.organdonor.gov
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Why become a donor?

Becoming an organ and tissue donor is a personal decision. But, when planned for properly, it can be a life-changing and life-saving experience.

Organ donation became a personal issue for my own family when my son Eric was diagnosed with T-cell Delta Gamma Lymphoma at the age of 16. Eric was fortunate to receive a risky mismatched bone marrow transplant from his uncle that helped to cure his cancer, but the treatment that saved his life badly damaged his kidneys. In 2007, I donated one of my kidneys to Eric. I'm pleased to report that today Eric is a healthy 24-year-old, and I've made a full recovery following the transplant surgery.

While our family's story has a happy ending not every family is so fortunate. According to Donate Life America, nearly 100,000 men, women and children are currently in need of life-saving organ transplants. Every 12 minutes another name is added to the national organ transplant list and, sadly, an average of 18 people die each day from the lack of available organs for transplant.

The statistics are sobering, but we each have the power to change them by simply becoming an organ and tissue donor.

Getting started

If you're ready to become an organ and tissue donor, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services suggests that you take these four simple steps:

- 1) Register with your state donor registry. Most states, but not all, have donor registries.
- 2) Designate your decision on your driver's license.
- 3) Sign a donor card today. Carry this card with you until you can formally designate your decision on your driver's license. (Print out a card at www.organdonor.gov.)
- 4) Talk to your family about your decision. Doing so will provide your family with the opportunity to ask you questions about your decision and gain a better understanding of the donation process.

Organ/Tissue Donor Card

I wish to donate my organs and tissues. I wish to give:

any needed organs and tissues only the following organs and tissues:

Donor Signature _____ Date _____

Witness _____

Witness _____

Today is the day

Whether you choose to make a living donation, like I did, or a donation after death, becoming an organ or tissue donor means that you are offering others the chance to lead healthy, productive, normal lives. It's my hope that my personal story will inspire others to commit to organ and tissue donation this Valentine's Day. Together we can help save lives.

CHARITY ALERT: In 2009 Aetna and the Aetna Foundation awarded \$50,000 to support the work of the National Kidney Registry (NKR). NKR helps patients with incompatible donors get kidney transplants through the registry's national matching system – matching those who are willing to donate with a recipient. Learn more at www.kidneyregistry.org.

Did You Know...?

- 28,000 lives were saved through organ donation in 2008 alone
- More than one million tissue transplants are performed each year, treating multiple diseases and injuries such as bone fracture, ligament repair and heart surgery
- A million Americans suffer from blindness, medical conditions or devastating injuries that can be successfully treated with donated corneas or tissue
- At the end of 2008, 79.7 million people were enrolled in state donor registries

Source: *Donate Life America, National Donor Designation Report Card, April 2009*

Website of the Month

Visit www.organdonor.gov to learn more about organ and tissue donation, including the latest information on research, legislation and how you can get involved.

Product Corner: Spotlight on Aetna Dental & Aetna's National Transplant Program

Aetna Dental Celebrates National Children's Dental Health Month

In honor of National Children's Dental Health Month, Aetna Dental employees are visiting schools and daycare centers across the country to spread the word about the importance of oral health. These Aetna volunteers will offer demonstrations and present puppet shows to children in Hartford, Conn.; Philadelphia, Penn.; Pittsburgh, Penn.; Missouri City, Texas; Los Angeles, Calif.; Agoura Hills, Calif.; and Jacksonville, Fla. Free dental screenings will even be available at some locations.

"Oral disease, primarily tooth decay, is the most common pediatric disease and studies have shown it can lead to physical and psychological disabilities as well as significant morbidity in adulthood," said Mary Lee Conicella, DMD, national director of clinical operations for Aetna Dental. "We owe it to all children in this country to make sure they receive proper dental care so that they are able to remain in good health throughout their lives. Aetna's efforts to educate children and parents on good oral hygiene are a way to help them achieve better oral health now and in the future."

Each February, the American Dental Association (ADA) sponsors National Children's Dental Health Month during February to raise awareness about the importance of oral health. For more information on the ADA or National Children's Dental Health Month, visit www.ada.org.

Aetna's National Transplant Program

Aetna offers support to our members who are facing a transplant through our National Transplant Program. This program helps our members through every phase of the transplant process – providing case management services, centralized coordination of all claims related to the transplant, and access to accredited medical facilities through our Institutes of Excellence transplant network. For more information, visit www.aetna.com (keyword: transplant).