

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ABILITY TO REGISTER ONLINE AS ORGAN, TISSUE AND EYE DONOR  
NOW AVAILABLE IN SPANISH



Donate Life Wisconsin and Wisconsin Department of Health Services Make it Easier for  
Spanish Speakers to Help Save and Improve Lives

**Madison, WI, January 17, 2017** – A new Spanish language version of the Wisconsin Donor Registry now makes it easier for Spanish speaking residents to register online as organ, tissue and eye donors at [DoneVidaWisconsin.org](http://DoneVidaWisconsin.org).

Hispanics/Latinos are the second largest and fastest growing minority racial and ethnic population in Wisconsin and more than 60 percent of the state's 370,000 Hispanics/Latinos speak a language other than only English in their homes. Nationally, ethnic minorities comprise more than half of all patients on the transplant waiting list and nearly 20 percent of the total patients waiting are Hispanic Americans.

"Multicultural communities are more affected by illnesses that increase risk for serious health problems, including organ failure," said Luis Fernandez, MD, director of the adult liver transplant program at UW Health. UW Health is a member of Donate Life Wisconsin, a non-profit statewide collaborative of organ, tissue and eye recovery organizations, transplant hospitals, patient advocacy organizations and other professionals. "Hispanic Americans have high rates of diabetes and heart disease. Mexican Americans in particular suffer disproportionately from obesity, which contributes to diabetes, hypertension and heart disease. Both Hispanic men and women have a chronic liver disease rate that is twice that of the white population."

The encouraging news is health professionals note transplant success rates increase when organs are matched between members of the same ethnic background.

"Diversity is critical among those who register as organ, tissue and eye donors. It helps improve and save more lives in our multicultural communities," added Jose Franco, MD, a Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin transplant hepatologist. The Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin health network is also a member of Donate Life Wisconsin. "Just one donor can save up to eight lives through organ donation and save and heal more than 75 lives through tissue and eye donation."

Currently, nearly two million eligible Wisconsin residents are not yet included in the Donor Registry. The new Spanish language Wisconsin Donor Registry is one of several efforts underway statewide and nationally to make it easier for donors to register their decision. Earlier this fall, Apple and Donate Life America announced that iPhone users can sign up as donors in the health app with the release of iOS 10.

In Wisconsin, anyone 15 ½ or older can register to be an organ, tissue and eye donor at the Wisconsin DMV or online at [DoneVidaWisconsin.org](http://DoneVidaWisconsin.org) in Spanish or [DonateLifeWisconsin.org](http://DonateLifeWisconsin.org) in English.

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**About Donate Life Wisconsin**

[Donate Life Wisconsin](http://DonateLifeWisconsin.org) (DLW) is a 501(c)3 statewide collaborative and affiliate of Donate Life America. DLW members include organ, tissue and eye recovery organizations, transplant hospitals, patient advocacy organizations and others who work together to save and enhance lives and motivate everyone to become organ, eye and tissue donors.

***For more information or to schedule an interview, contact:***

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