



health

Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



## MEDIA STATEMENT

To: Editors & Health Journalists  
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### Health Department urges people to save lives through organ donation

**Pretoria:** As the country joins the global community to commemorate the campaign to raise awareness about the significance of organ transplant and donation, the Department of Health appeals to members of public to embrace the gift of life through organ donation. Although the call is not limited to organs, but also blood and tissues.

A number of people lose their lives due to the unavailability of organs that could save them, therefore this campaign aims to help people realise that volunteering to donate their organs while alive or after death can be life-changing for many other people. The 2022 organ donation campaign is commemorated under the theme, “**A life after mine**” which serves as a clarion call to South Africans to become lifesavers through organ donation.

Organ donation is a gift of life, and a single organ donor can save up to seven lives, and at the same time improve the quality of life of many people by removing the emotional and psychological burden.

Currently, South Africa has around 2780 people waitlisted for organ donation and transplant which include kidney, liver, heart and lung, while about 189 people lost their lives while waiting for someone to gift them with a life-saving organ during the same period. These waiting lists are growing while more people, including young children are dying almost every day while waiting for organs.

Although the wider public is aware of blood donation, but there is little knowledge when it comes to organ donation. We don't believe lack of organ donation or involvement has nothing to do with cultural and religious beliefs, but limited knowledge, hence the department has joined hands with stakeholders such as Organ Donation Foundation, including civil society organisations in the sector to raise and sustain awareness about this important campaign.

A number of people have benefitted from organ donation across cultural and religious differences, and their lives have been changed.

Anyone can volunteer to donate their organs once they reach 18 years of age. The two common forms of organ donation include live donations in which donors who are alive can donate organs like a kidney and a part of the liver because human beings can survive with one kidney and the liver is the only organ in the body that is known to

regenerate itself, making it possible for these organs to be transplanted while the donor is still alive.

Another form of organ donation is known as deceased donation which involves organ transplant to a living person from a consented donor who has passed on. Organ donor volunteers can participate in this life-saving campaign by going to their nearest hospital to ask for assistance on the steps to follow for one to donate, or contact the Provincial or National Department of Health directly. Alternatively, they can go onto the organ donation foundation website ([www.odf.org.za](http://www.odf.org.za)) and sign up to as a donor. [People are urged to have the discussions with their families and loved ones once they decide to sign up for organ donation.](#)

The department has approved a number of organ donations and transplants in the recent years and months between living donors and their recipients to save the lives of those who could not survive the next day without organ transplant. Kidney and liver are the two organs that are needed most frequently due to various reasons but one common liver failure cause in kids are biliary atresia which is often misdiagnosed as jaundice.

We call on all South African, especially healthcare workers, especially our healthcare workers to be part of the organ donor network in order to reduce the backlog to save lives.

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