



KATY TANG
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**SUPERVISOR KATY TANG ANNOUNCES EFFORTS TO INCREASE ORGAN DONOR
REGISTRATION IN SAN FRANCISCO DURING NATIONAL DONATE LIFE MONTH**

*Resolution reaffirms San Francisco's commitment to increasing awareness about the need for and
benefits of organ and tissue donation*

Today Supervisor Katy Tang announced a [resolution](#) she introduced this week at the Board of Supervisors declaring April National Donate Life Month in San Francisco in an effort to encourage residents to register as organ and tissue donors and in recognition of those that have saved the lives of others through generous acts of donation. The resolution also outlines specific steps the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH), the San Francisco Health Service System (SFHSS), and the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) have taken to raise awareness about organ and tissue donation in partnership with Donor Network West, a federally designated Organ Procurement Organization serving Northern and Central California. The resolution is co-sponsored by Supervisor Jeff Sheehy.

According to the United Network of Organ Sharing (UNOS), there are approximately 665 San Franciscans waiting for one or more life-saving organs, and over 119,000 people waiting nationally. Last year, only 67 of those San Franciscans were transplant recipients. And every year, the waiting list for organs grows, but the number of donors and transplants remains about the same. In fact, 22 people die every day in the United States waiting for a life-saving transplant.

“I want to bring attention to the importance of organ and tissue donation in San Francisco because we need more people in San Francisco to register as organ donors,” said Supervisor Katy Tang. “Even though the waiting list for organs gets longer every year, the number of donors and transplants does not keep up with the need.”

In San Francisco, about 291 of patients waiting for an organ transplant are Asian, but last year in the entire state of California only 77 organ and tissue donors were of Asian descent. One barrier to registering donors is that people often lack knowledge about organ and tissue donation. In 2012, Assembly Bill 1967 (AB 1967) was signed into law and amended the California Education Code to include a provision that all health and science curriculum frameworks include the subject of organ procurement and tissue donation. San Francisco will be the first school district in California to actively implement this in school curriculum, in partnership with SFDPH and Donor Network West.

“Organ and tissue donation saves and heals lives. Developing partnerships and family conversations are essential to educating the diverse and multicultural communities we are privileged to serve,” said Cindy Siljstrom, Chief Executive Officer at Donor Network West. “Partnering with the San Francisco Department of Public Health and the San Francisco Unified School District opens the door to the youth



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through the wellness centers and multicultural clinics throughout San Francisco. All of this gives hope to those in need.”

“By joining forces with San Francisco schools and Donor Network West, we can improve education and awareness about the importance of organ and tissue donation,” said Barbara Garcia, San Francisco Director of Health. “We know that disparities in organ transplantation particularly affect Asians, African Americans, Latinos and American Indians. Reaching the youth in those communities is an important step to increasing donations that save lives.”

SFDPH has also committed to educating primary care physicians working in their clinics throughout San Francisco, focusing their efforts in areas where donor registration may be lower, such as in the Chinatown, Mission, and Castro neighborhoods. The San Francisco Health Service System (SFHSS) is also providing education about organ and tissue donor registration during open enrollment and flu season, where they typically see over 500 employees and retirees each year.

A deceased organ donor can save up to eight lives by donating their heart, pancreas, intestines, liver, two kidneys, and two lungs. A deceased tissue donor can enhance up to 75 lives by donating their eyes, cornea, skin, heart valves, veins, and bones and connective tissues. And there is even the possibility for living organ donation – a living donor can save a life by providing one kidney or a portion of their liver.

“I hope that by educating ourselves, our residents, and especially our youth, we will inspire people to spread the word about the impact of organ and tissue donation,” said Supervisor Katy Tang. “Sometimes we don’t think we have the ability to make a lasting or impactful change – but that is simply not true. Organ donation really does save lives and that is something we can all make a choice to do.”

Supervisor Tang’s resolution will be voted on at the Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday April 25, 2017.

For more information, please contact Supervisor Katy Tang’s office at (415) 554-7460 or Ashley.Summers@sfgov.org.

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