

January 16, 2001  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: David Bosch  
Director of Communications  
312/431-3600, ext. 155

## **2000 a record-breaking year for organ donation in Illinois**

The Regional Organ Bank of Illinois (ROBI) recorded a record-breaking year for organ donation in 2000. 287 donors made possible 859 lifesaving organ transplants marking an increase in organ donation in Illinois and northwest Indiana for the second consecutive year.

“We are extremely proud of our achievements this past year,” said Jerry Anderson, ROBI’s President/CEO. “Success for ROBI means that lives were saved and, because of the work we do, hundreds of people are celebrating a second chance.”

ROBI also set a record in bone donation for the third year with 597 donors. Tissue donation remained high across the board helping thousands of recipients through life-enhancing surgeries.

ROBI’s success rate continues to grow despite the fact that donation numbers remain flat throughout much of the nation. Anderson attributes ROBI’s success to an increase in public awareness through community and school programs and a strong partnership with the 183 hospitals in our service region. In addition, support from other donation-related organizations including the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois, Secretary of State Jesse White and many others is key to our successful outreach efforts.

Despite ROBI’s success, more than 400 Illinois men, women and children died last year waiting for a transplant. Another person is added to the national waiting list every 14 minutes, a list that now includes more than 71,000 people (more than 4,100 in Illinois alone). Sixteen of these people will die each day waiting.

-more-

“Many of these deaths could be prevented if all potential donors would, in fact, become donors,” Anderson said. “We are dedicated to increasing donor awareness and education. Too many people are waiting and far too many are dying for this not to be an all-out commitment.”

Organs and tissues from a single donor can help more than 25 individuals. Choosing to be a donor is as simple as signing a Uniform Donor Card (such as the card on the back of the driver’s license) and, most importantly, sharing your intentions with family members.

ROBI is a not-for-profit, federally designated organ procurement organization serving the northern three-fourths of Illinois and northwest Indiana. ROBI is responsible for recovering and distributing organs and tissues for transplantation in accordance with strict federal guidelines. In addition, ROBI provides education about organ and tissue donation for healthcare professionals and the general public. ROBI’s main office is in Chicago with satellite offices in Bloomington, Champaign, Peoria, Rockford and Springfield.

###