

Contact: Kim McCullough, Public Relations
Tel: 630/758-2736
Email: kmccullough@giftofhope.org

630/758-2600
www.giftofhope.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Illinois hospitals named “Partners in Hope”

Practices contributed to region’s record levels for lifesaving organ/tissue donation

ELMHURST, Ill. (April 7, 2004) – Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network has named 11 Illinois hospitals as “Partners in Hope” for their work helping to increase the availability of donated organs and tissues for patients awaiting transplant.

Gift of Hope executive leadership will present the Partners in Hope awards at each hospital in conjunction with National Donate Life Month in April, recognizing each hospital’s commitment to supporting families of donors and its excellence of practice in working with Gift of Hope to facilitate the donation process.

“Through their achievements, these hospitals helped many thousands of men, women and children – by helping us save and improve lives through organ and tissue donation, as well as support families who make the altruistic decision to donate,” said Gift of Hope President/CEO Jarold Anderson. “We recognize our Partners in Hope as leaders in the healthcare community committed to resolving the critical shortage of donated organs and tissues for transplant.”

The hospitals named as Partners in Hope are:

- **Advocate Christ Medical Center, Oak Lawn**, for its demonstrated commitment to improving donation practices through participation with Gift of Hope in the Organ Donation Collaborative Breakthrough Series developed by the Boston-based Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI). Its nursing staff have achieved excellence in integrating donation education and responsibilities with Gift of Hope into ongoing practice and patient care – contributing to its work with 30 organ donors in 2003, the most of any hospital in Illinois.
- **Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center, Chicago**, for excellence in practice among its physicians, nurses and allied staff in preserving the option for donation for patients who are medically eligible for organ donation. Illinois Masonic is also recognized for creating an overall hospital environment that facilitates the donation process with Gift of Hope, and for working with Gift of Hope to provide specialty training for trauma physicians to discuss the donation option with families of eligible patients.

- **Advocate Lutheran General Hospital, Park Ridge**, for its excellence in support of families who have lost a loved one and are considering donation.
- **Blessing Hospital, Quincy**, for excellence in referring potential organ and tissue donors to Gift of Hope for evaluation, achieving a 99.7 percent referral rate. The hospital also is recognized for its “Life Team,” established to address donation activity, analyze trends, monitor potential improvement and develop community and hospital-based donation awareness programs. In 2003, Blessing achieved a 27% increase in tissue donation, and worked with the families of five organ donors in 2003, compared with two in 2002.
- **Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana**, for ensuring every eligible family is offered the option of donation through a collaborative approach by Gift of Hope and hospital personnel. In 2003, Carle worked with the families of 15 organ donors, compared with 7 in 2002. It also worked with the families of 23 tissue donors in 2003, placing it among hospitals with the highest number of tissue donors in Gift of Hope’s service region.
- **GlenOaks Hospital, Glendale Heights**, for its demonstrated commitment to donation through continuing education programs on the donation process for nursing staff in 2003. It also maintains an overall hospital environment that facilitates the donation process with Gift of Hope and clinical staff who ensure that families receive the option to donate. Hospital staff worked with Gift of Hope coordinators to achieve a 100% consent rate among families eligible to consider donation in 2003.
- **Methodist Medical Center of Illinois, Peoria**, for excellence in referring potential organ and tissue donors to Gift of Hope for evaluation, achieving a 99.8 percent referral rate. The hospital worked with the families of three organ donors in 2003, compared with one in 2002.
- **OSF Saint Francis Medical Center, Peoria**, for excellence in referring potential organ and tissue donors to Gift of Hope for evaluation, achieving a 98 percent referral rate. OSF worked with the families of 23 organ donors in 2003, the most it has ever worked with in a single year, and also achieved a 13% increase in tissue donation over 2002.
- **St. James Hospital & Health Centers, Olympia Fields**, for demonstrated commitment among emergency department staff in preserving patients’ option for organ donation. The hospital achieved 100% compliance in referring seven potential organ donors and 70% donation rate during the third quarter 2003, and worked with the families of nine organ donors in 2003.
- **St. John’s Hospital, Springfield**, for ensuring that every eligible family is offered the option of donation through a collaborative approach by Gift of Hope and hospital personnel. In 2003, St. John’s approaches increased its successful organ donation cases from 2 to 8 . It also worked with the families of 29 tissue donors in 2003, placing St. John’s among hospitals with the highest number of tissue donors in Gift of Hope’s service region.

- **University of Chicago Hospitals, Chicago**, for its demonstrated commitment to improving donation practices through participation with Gift of Hope in the Organ Donation Collaborative Breakthrough Series developed by the Boston-based Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI). The hospital's nursing and physician staff also are recognized for working with Gift of Hope in 2003 to integrate donation education into its programs and working to improve overall process within the hospital.

Established in 1986, Gift of Hope is the federally designated not-for-profit organ procurement organization (OPO) dedicated to recovering organs and tissue for patients awaiting transplants in the northern three-quarters of Illinois and northwest Indiana. Working with the 185 hospitals it serves as well as local and national donation and transplant communities, Gift of Hope continually works to develop effective, government-regulated systems to help increase the number of donated organs available for transplant.

Gift of Hope staff work with and educate medical professionals on all aspects of donation, from the appropriate identification and timing for referrals of potential donors to the medical management of donors and the recovery surgery. For families of donors, Gift of Hope provides information on the donation process, placement of organs and tissues recovered and the progress of recipients, as well as follow-up support and programs. Gift of Hope also coordinates programs to educate the 11.3 million people in its service region about organ and tissue donation.

In 2003, 972 lifesaving organs were made available for transplant because of the generous decisions of 309 families in Illinois and northwest Indiana to consent to organ donation. That compares with 929 transplants made possible through 289 donors in 2002. In addition to last year's record level of organ donation, 870 families consented to tissue donation, enabling tens of thousands of patients to receive medical transplants of bone, heart valves and other tissues.

Donation has remained strong so far in 2004, Anderson said. He credits the region's increased donation activity to higher levels of identification and referral of potential donors to Gift of Hope from the 185 hospitals in its service area, as well as the support of funeral directors, coroners and medical examiners to ensure that donation remains possible for families who wish to donate.

More than 4,500 patients at Illinois' eight transplant centers await lifesaving transplants of a heart, lung, liver, kidney, pancreas or small intestine. Nationally, 17 people die every day waiting for lifesaving organ transplants and more than 100 others are added to the national transplant waiting list. Meanwhile, an estimated one in 20 Americans will require some type of medical tissue transplant during a lifetime; despite the number of transplants performed and the anticipated future need, just 8 percent of the need for transplantable tissue is currently being met.

Organs and tissues from a single donor can help more than 25 people. Everyone, no matter how young or old, can be a lifesaver by choosing to be an organ and tissue donor. To become a donor, sign a Uniform Donor Card (such as the card on the back of a driver's license) and, most importantly, inform family members of the decision. For more information, visit www.giftofhope.org or contact Gift of Hope at 630/758-2600.

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