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Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network Earns AATB Reaccreditation

ELMHURST, Ill. (Dec. 15, 2006)—Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network has been awarded the prestigious reaccreditation of the American Association of Tissue Banks (AATB), Gift of Hope President/CEO Jarold Anderson has announced.

Accreditation follows an intensive nine-month process, including an on-site inspection by a specially trained AATB inspector. It establishes that the level of medical, technical and administrative performance within the facility meets or exceeds the standards set by the AATB. By successfully meeting those requirements, Gift of Hope joins nearly 100 similar facilities across the United States and abroad that have earned AATB accreditation.

The AATB has accredited tissue banks since 1986. Today, its Accreditation Program and its *Standards for Tissue Banking* are the only such private, industry programs available in the United States. AATB accreditation assists tissue banks in determining whether their methods, procedures, personnel knowledge, equipment and facilities meet established requirements. The minimum requirements for accreditation are based on the *AATB Standards* and the *Accreditation Policies Manual*.

“Obtaining AATB accreditation is voluntary, but to Gift of Hope it’s a requirement,” says Anderson. “With AATB’s recognition of the effective standards and procedures we have in place, we know we are ensuring tissue donations that ultimately provide the safest, most beneficial outcomes for patients in need of tissue grafts in our communities.”

AATB-accredited tissue banks are involved in the determination of donor eligibility as well as the recovery, preparation, storage and/or distribution of human cells and tissue for transplantation or research. Obtaining AATB accreditation demonstrates an organization’s commitment to the highest standards and to the highest possible level of service to patients and the transplant community. AATB-accredited organizations are recognized as the leaders in their field and as pivotal voices in the dialogue through which consensus-based, voluntary standards are developed and implemented.

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Founded in 1976, the AATB is a scientific and educational, tax-exempt organization. Its mission is to provide transplantable cells and tissues of uniform high quality in quantities sufficient to meet needs. To accomplish this, the AATB publishes standards, accredits facilities, certifies tissue bank personnel, publishes books and guidance documents, and produces educational programs to improve tissue banking.

Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network is proud to serve as the federally designated not-for-profit organ procurement organization (OPO) that coordinates organ and tissue donation and services to families of donors in the northern three-quarters of Illinois and northwest Indiana. Since its inception in 1986, Gift of Hope has coordinated donations that have saved the lives of more than 10,000 organ transplant recipients, and improved the lives of hundreds of thousands of tissue transplant recipients. As one of 58 organ procurement organizations that make up the nation's organ donation system, Gift of Hope works with 183 hospitals and serves 11.7 million residents in its donation service area.

For more information, about organ and tissue donation, call the Gift of Hope Education Hotline at 888/307-3668 or visit www.giftofhope.org.

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