Division of Transplantation (DoT) has created an electronic news bulletin to share information about research projects funded through DoT. This first edition focuses on grant projects targeting adults age 50 and older. Periodically, we will email additional bulletins that feature projects related to other topics or audiences. We encourage you to share them with those in your organ donation or research community.

DoT Grants Increase Older Adult Registrations

Three projects added 4,501 donor registrations to state registries

Increasing the rate at which older adults register to be organ donors is critical to overcoming the shortage of organs for transplantation. Three grant projects funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) Division of Transplantation added new donors and uncovered effective ways to reach the 50+ crowd. By projects’ end, there were an additional 4,501 donors aged 50 and older on state registries.
Strategies that work:

- Face-to-face group discussions
- In-hand materials such as brochures
- Mailers from a government organization (i.e., department of health, secretary of state)
- Messages that explain they’re not “too old”

**Lifeline of Ohio and University of Cincinnati** added 115 donor registrations and found that older adults are more likely to register to be organ donors after they participate in group discussions with other people their age than they are if they watch a presentation on organ donation.

“This specific age group has questions about organ donation and wants the opportunity to discuss and understand how they can be an organ donor,” said Linda Jones, principal investigator from Lifeline of Ohio. “The personal interaction is important and effective when promoting older adult organ donor registration.”

Since the study, Lifeline of Ohio has added time for discussion after presentations in 50+ communities. Jones and Kimberly Downing, principal researcher from the University of Cincinnati, would like to train volunteers to run these interventions so they can present in even more communities.

In another 50+ grant study conducted by Jones and Downey, 697 adults over 50 registered to be donors after receiving a brochure—in the mail and at health fairs—with the messaging “Did You Know You’re Not Too Old?”

“The barriers to organ donation in this group are primarily age- or health-related,” said Jones, “and addressing these issues is important.”

In surveys and focus groups conducted before the brochure was designed, older adults said they preferred to get organ donation information in brochures more than through radio or TV ads. They said they want to hold literature in their hands and read about organ donation at their leisure.
Who the information comes from also matters, according to a grant project conducted by Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Adults who received letters about organ donation addressed from the Illinois Secretary of State and Iowa Department of Public Health registered as organ donors at higher rates than those who received letters from their organ procurement organization. Investigators concluded that letters from the state organizations “piqued message recipients’ attention”, resulting in greater likelihood that they would open and read the letter.

“These grant projects uncovered important ways to talk about organ donation with a population that has been underrepresented on organ donor registries.” said Melissa Greenwald, MD, Director, Division of Transplantation, HRSA. “If others can use these same tactics to reach out to older adults, we can continue to increase the number of donors and save more lives—our ultimate goal.”

Learn more about these projects using the resources below.

Want to know more?

**Can We Talk?: A Dialogue Intervention to Increase Organ Donation Registration among Older Adults**

Principal Investigator: Linda Jones, RN, Lifeline of Ohio. [ljones0625@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ljones0625@sbcglobal.net), 614-208-6136

Principal Researcher: Kimberly Downing, Ph.D., Institute for Policy Research, University of Cincinnati (UC IPR). [kim.downing@uc.edu](mailto:kim.downing@uc.edu), 513-556-5082


Increasing Older Adult Registrations in the 1st Person Consent Ohio Donor Registry
Principal Investigator: Linda Jones, RN, Lifeline of Ohio, ljones0625@sbcglobal.net
Principal Researcher: Kimberly Downing, Ph.D., Institute for Policy Research, University of Cincinnati (UC IPR) kim.downing@uc.edu


Effective Campaign Strategies for Promoting Organ Donation to Mature Adults: A Multi-State Intervention
Principal Investigator: Brian Quick, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, bquick@illinois.edu
Dave Bosch, Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network
Thomas Hugh Feeley, Ashley E. Anker, Buffalo University, The State University of New York


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