



**For immediate release**

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## **NEW RESEARCH REVEALS ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN ORGAN DONATION AWARENESS**

*More Louisianians will donate organs  
African Americans still skeptical, believe religious obstacles exist  
Clergy, doctors play influential role*

**New Orleans, LA, May 1, 2003** – “We’ve come a long way in just four years of educating the public about the dire need for organ donation, but we have a long way to go,” says Carol Asher, executive director of the National Donor Awareness Foundation. Recent research conducted by the Foundation in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama revealed three key findings that show the effectiveness of awareness programs, but highlight continuing disparities in awareness and willingness to donate along racial lines.

- The number of Louisianians who have arranged to donate their organs has nearly doubled since 1998 when a previous statewide survey was conducted. (Louisiana is the only state for which previous numbers were available.)
- African Americans are more likely to believe that money and influence are key factors in how quickly a patient receives a transplant, and, that their religious beliefs prohibit donation.
- Among those who affect people’s opinions about donation, clergy members and doctors are the most influential.

“We are very pleased to see that awareness has increased in the time we’ve been conducting public education programs across Louisiana,” says Asher. “Unfortunately, we still find African Americans are reluctant to donate. This creates a critical situation since more than 70 percent of those on the waiting list need kidney transplants, and more than 60 percent of those who need kidneys are African American. When you are talking about donation, race really does matter -- it helps to make a kidney transplant more successful. We have a lot of work to do in all three states to bring the donation message into the African American community. And now that we have confirmed that clergy and doctors can deliver the message most effectively, we will be crafting and adapting our campaigns to enlist their help.”

The research also revealed that although there is high awareness of the fact that there are more people awaiting life-saving transplants than there are available organs, fewer than half the respondents knew that family consent is required for a person’s organs to be donated at the time of death. In addition, researchers found that people who embrace donation advocate its importance and merit wholeheartedly.

The quantitative research study, conducted in May by an independent research firm, questioned 2032 residents ages 25-54 across the three states and maintained racial quotas representative of each state's overall population.

For more information about these results, or to obtain a comprehensive copy of the research findings, please visit [www.organawareness.org](http://www.organawareness.org), or call the National Donor Awareness Foundation at 504-220-8949.

The National Donor Awareness Foundation was founded in 1999 as the Legacy Donor Foundation. As a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, it provides funding to educate the public about organ donation to foster informed family acceptance of the process. Its mission is to prevent loss of human life due to lack of organ donors. The Foundation encourages people to make the decision to become donors and to share their wishes with loved ones.

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