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MHA Keystone and Gift of Life Michigan Partner to Launch Organ Donation Improvement Program

Collaborative expands successful pilot program to increase organ donors

LANSING, Mich. — Today the MHA Keystone Center and Gift of Life Michigan officially kicked off the first of three *Keystone: Gift of Life* collaborative workshops designed to boost the number of organ donations in the state through ongoing education and awareness.

Today's workshop was held in Brighton with 145 health care professionals as registered attendees from more than 40 hospitals across the state.

In 2001, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services challenged the largest 300 hospitals in the nation to participate in the Organ Donation Breakthrough Collaborative to raise awareness about the vital importance of organ and tissue donation and increase the donation rate at their institutions. For the past two years, the Department of Health and Human Services has sponsored national collaborative efforts to address the challenges of organ donation. Ninety-five hospital teams participated in the first year of collaboration and shared their results to help others achieve their impressive results. The national collaboratives involve four Michigan hospitals – University of Michigan Health System, Ann Arbor; Henry Ford Health System, Detroit; Sinai-Grace Hospital, Detroit; and Hurley Medical Center, Flint.

In this spirit, the MHA Keystone Center for Patient Safety & Quality and Gift of Life Michigan are building upon the national efforts and have invited all state hospitals to learn from what the national collaborative and the four pioneering Michigan hospitals involved. *Keystone: Gift of Life* is a year-long project that will couple hospital organ recovery teams with experts, to improve performance through the application of evidence-based best practices.

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The *Keystone: Gift of Life* collaborative will involve three one-day workshops between February 2005 and January 2006. These workshops will focus on how health care workers can help boost the number of eligible donors who actually donate organs, known as conversion rates. In addition, there will be monthly conference calls, a participant Web site with tools and a bulletin board to share learning, and updates to hospitals on rates of progress.

“Michigan’s hospital community is proud of the work four of our hospitals have accomplished participating at the national level and is eager for them to share their experience to help more Michigan hospitals meet these important goals,” said MHA President Spencer Johnson. “We are fortunate to be partnering with an organization with such proven success as the Gift of Life Michigan.”

Gift of Life Michigan reports that 2004 was a record breaking year with 920 organs recovered from 276 organ donors, up 33 percent and 31 percent respectively from 2003. 748 tissue donors enhanced and saved the lives of countless people, surpassing the previous record of 742 tissue donors in 2002.

Despite this improvement, 85,000 people across the nation are currently waiting for organ donations. Much of this can be attributed to people not fully being aware of the need for organs. Additionally, many don’t realize that most organ recipients go on to lead very active lives.

“While 2004 was a record breaking year for Michigan, sadly, 150 people died waiting for their lifesaving organ transplant,” said Richard Pietroski, associate executive director of Gift of Life Michigan. “We thank MHA and participating Michigan hospitals for their commitment to ultimately provide more people with the precious gift of life.”

The MHA is a state association, based in Lansing, that represents and supports Michigan hospitals, health systems and health care providers through education, advocacy and communication. More information about the MHA Keystone Center is available online at www.mhakeystonecenter.org.

Gift of Life Michigan is a nonprofit 501(c)3 independent corporation certified by Medicare and designated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicare Services as an organ recovery organization for Michigan. The Gift of Life Organ, Tissue & Eye Donor Registry is a confidential, 24-hour-a-day, computerized database that documents residents' wishes regarding organ, tissue and eye donation. Since Gift of Life is contacted upon every hospital death, signing the Donor Registry is the best way to ensure a person's wishes are carried out. To become a registered donor, sign up online at www.giftoflifemichigan.org or request a Donor Registry card by contacting Gift of Life at 800-482-4881.