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One Organ Donor Can Save up to 75 Lives: Now is the Time to Donate Life

BRUNSWICK, Georgia: January 21, 2021 – The patient was only 68 years old, but a stroke ended her life. As a registered organ donor, her passing was not in vain. Her generosity, and the efforts of Southeast Georgia Health System professionals, gave three people the gift of life. One of her kidneys was transplanted into a fellow Georgian, a mother of two. A 60-year-old man received her other kidney, and the third patient received a liver transplant. The donor's heart was recovered for medical research and education purposes. This donor gave three people another chance, but one organ and tissue donor has the potential to save as many as 75 lives.

This life-changing story happened with help from the Health System and LifeLink® of Georgia, a non-profit organization responsible for the recovery of organs and tissue for transplantation. “Without the support and hard work of your physicians, nurses and other medical staff, the donation would not have been possible, but it all began with the patient's true generosity and concern for others,” says Dustin T. Diggs, FACHE, Senior Vice President and executive director for LifeLink of Georgia.

The Health System encourages all Georgians to join their state's organ and tissue donor registry. It takes just five minutes to register and the need is urgent. Every day, 20 people run out of time waiting for a transplant, according to the Health Resources & Services Administration. More than 108,000 people in the United States need an organ transplant; more than 4,600 of them live in Georgia.

“Thousands of people are alive or living better lives today, thanks to an organ or tissue transplant,” says Jan Jones, R.N., BSN, director, Patient Care Services at the Health System. “Without selfless organ donors, thousands of people – many who live among us – will die. During this pandemic when so many of us feel powerless, becoming a donor gives us the power to save lives.”

Jones says that while most donations occur after the donor's death, some organs and tissues can be donated while the donor is alive. “Four out of every ten organ transplants are from a living donor. Several programs exist solely to support the physical health and emotional health of living donors because it is such an important component of organ donation,” Jones says.

Georgians can join the state's organ and tissue donor registry in several ways:

Visit www.DonateLifeGeorgia.

Say yes to organ and tissue donation when you obtain or renew your driver license or identification card at a local driver license office, or when obtaining a hunting/fishing license through the Department of Natural Resources website.

Call Donate Life Georgia directly at 1-866-57-SHARE (1-866-577-4273) and request a registry card.

If you have questions about organ and tissue donation, call LifeLink of Georgia at 1-800-544-6667 or visit www.LifeLinkFoundation.org.

ABOUT SOUTHEAST GEORGIA HEALTH SYSTEM

Southeast Georgia Health System is a not-for-profit health system comprised of two acute care hospitals, two long term care facilities, two comprehensive Cancer Care Centers and multiple specialty care centers, including orthopaedic and spine care, joint replacement, breast care, maternity, outpatient rehabilitation, sleep management and wound care. The Brunswick Campus Cancer Care Center is accredited by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer and offers the only CyberKnife® M6 with MLC technology in Georgia. Additionally, the Southeast Georgia Physician Associates medical group includes more than 140 providers working in 20 different medical specialties at more than 50 locations. The Health System is part of Coastal Community Health, a regional affiliation between Baptist Health and Southeast Georgia Health System forming a highly integrated hospital network focused on significant initiatives designed to enhance the quality and value of care provided to our contiguous communities. For more information, visit sghs.org.

ABOUT LIFELINK OF GEORGIA: LIFELINK OF GEORGIA, which facilitates donation after death, is the federally designated, independent, non-profit organ and tissue recovery organization dedicated to serving patients in need of transplant therapy and their families. LifeLink collaborates with hospitals, medical professionals, other agencies (such as medical examiners and law enforcement) and the public to increase awareness of the growing need for organ and tissue donation. LifeLink medical professionals are on call 24 hours daily, serving a population over 10 million and 197 hospitals throughout Georgia and two South Carolina counties including four transplant centers. Individuals who wish to become a donor are encouraged to register on Georgia's organ, tissue and eye donor registry so that their decision can be carried out in the event donation is possible, and to relieve their family of the burden of making that decision in the midst of their grief after the loss of a loved one.

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