



COMMUNIQUÉ

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ORGAN DONATION IN QUÉBEC IN 2016

Steady and significant increase in the number of potential donors referred to Transplant Québec, with 170 effective organ donors and 480 transplant recipients.

Montréal, March 9, 2017 – In 2016, hospitals referred a total of 626 potential donors to Transplant Québec, making it the best year to date for identifying donors, a full 60% higher than the figure recorded in 2010. Of the 170 effective donors, 30 were donors after cardiocirculatory death (DCD), an increase of more than 50% in this type of organ donation compared to 2015. A look back at the 10 years since the protocol for organ donation after cardiocirculatory death was first introduced in Québec confirms that this practice can continue to be developed, thus allowing more families to honour the wishes of their loved ones. As of December 31, 2016, 841 people were registered on the waiting list, 423 fewer than in 2011.

2016 Highlights

- **Identifying potential donors** in emergency and intensive care units constitutes one of the best practices applied by medical teams faced with a poor prognosis in a patient with severe and irreversible neurological injury. Some 5,000 people have taken Transplant Québec's online training course since 2012.
- **Refusals on the part of families** decreased for the second consecutive year, going from 26 to 21% of all the referrals processed by Transplant Québec. In this regard, training teams on how to approach families is a determining factor. What's more, the presence of physicians serving as organ donation coordinators in 10 establishments has been a catalyst for the continued development of an organ donation culture.
- There were 170 donors, including 30 **donors after cardiocirculatory death (DCD)**, an increase of more than 50% compared to 2015 (19 DCD donors). DCD now account for 18% of all deceased donors. The current target is 20%. The protocol for donation after cardiocirculatory death was first implemented in four Québec-based hospitals in 2007, and the practice has since been adopted by a growing number of hospitals (32 hospitals have carried out a DCD process over the past 10 years).
- A reduction in the number **transplant recipients** was noted **in Québec**, with 480 people receiving an organ, compared to 507 in 2015. Recipients received a kidney (275), liver (99), heart (46), and lungs (51);
- Close to **four of 10 Quebecers formalized their consent** to organ and tissue donation by signing up to one of the two registries:
A steady increase has been noted in the number of people signing up to the registries:
 - ✓ 2,719,141 in the RAMQ registry (YES only) since February 27, 2011;
 - ✓ 1,420,725 in the Chambre des notaires du Québec registry (85% YES and 15% NO) since November 1, 2005.

Complementary information sheet available at <http://transplantquebec.ca/communiqués>

Investing in organ and tissue donation is profitable

"It's worth mentioning the investments made by hospital teams and Transplant Québec. Transplant Québec's continued efforts to train and support hospital teams remain key to increasing number of organ donations. Our challenge lies in having all Québec hospitals play an active part in identifying potential donors," explained Mr. Louis Beaulieu, Executive Director of Transplant Québec.

The human and economic impacts of transplantation have been borne out once again:

- The sooner a transplantation is performed, the lower the risk of death is;
- In 2016 alone, savings of \$13 million were generated across the province's health care system thanks to Québec's performance in organ donation, stemming mainly from 331 kidney transplants (from deceased donors and living donors). In addition, given that one in two kidney transplant recipients resumes an active life¹, there are considerable dividends for society, to say nothing of the benefits on a human level.

Testimonial from Gaston Martin, heart transplant recipient

"After suffering a first heart attack during a hockey game, and then a second seven years later, I was left with serious, permanent and debilitating damage. In spite of a good convalescence and healthy lifestyle habits, the family heredity caught up to me. In the end, I found myself on total and permanent disability at the age of 50. Fortunately, after spending two months in the hospital, hooked up to machines, I at last received a heart *in extremis*. I've since taken advantage of the new lease on life I received thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor by doing my part to promote organ and tissue donation." Mr. Martin is an ambassador for Transplant Québec and a Good Samaritan for l'Association canadienne des dons d'organes..

Testimonial from Wendy Sura, donor family member

"The fateful call came on September 6. It was the kind of call where you almost know the outcome right away, where your life suddenly stops. My dear father was in intensive care, in a state of brain death following a ruptured aneurysm. My older sister suddenly found herself alone, faced with one of the most heart-rending decisions of her life: disconnecting our father and letting him go, or opting in favour of organ donation. Dad had never mentioned it, and Mum wasn't convinced, either. What would we say to the rest of the family, for whom death is taboo. Her controversial choice gave me the greatest gift of all: the chance to spend the final night of my father at his side ... Knowing now that above and beyond our suffering, Dad represented renewed hope for two families. He had shown me that solidarity and generosity take precedence over any differences of race, faith and allegiance. His unerring generosity gave us the courage to say YES. I'm proud of my older sister's decision, just as I'm proud to have supported it, knowing that my father would have been proud of us."

About Transplant Québec

Transplant Québec has a mandate from the Minister of Health and Social Services to save lives and improve the health of persons in need of a transplant by coordinating the organ donation process, ensuring the equitable allocation of organs, supporting best clinical practices through consensus-building and the mobilization of its partners, and promoting organ donation in the society at large. Transplant Québec therefore works to ensure that the greatest possible number of Quebecers waiting for an organ can benefit from a transplant in as timely a fashion as practicable.

¹Taken from the *Étude sur l'économie de l'insuffisance rénale*, Yves Rabeau, Ph.D., for the Québec Branch of The Kidney Foundation of Canada, November 2012.

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