

April 23, 2012

**PROVINCE MAKES IT EASIER TO BE AN ORGAN AND TISSUE DONOR
WITH NEW ONLINE REGISTRY**

- - -

**Health Minister Recruits Premier,
At SignUpForLife.ca**

Manitobans can now register their intent to donate their organs and tissues at www.SignUpForLife.ca, the province's new online organ and tissue donation registry, Premier Greg Selinger announced today.

"SignUpForLife.ca is about saving the lives of others and making your wishes about organ and tissue donation known," said Selinger. "We all have the ability to make a difference and this new registry is a simple and secure way for Manitobans to quickly indicate their organ and tissue donation decisions."

Any Manitoba resident, 18 years of age and over, can register online their intent to become an organ and tissue donor. Individuals' donation wishes will be stored in a secure Manitoba eHealth database, where they will be readily accessible to authorized health professionals should the information ever be required.

Arlene Wilgosh, president and CEO, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, said the registry will be an invaluable tool for health-care teams dealing with end-of-life issues. "It will help doctors and health professionals to easily access donor records and work with a potential donor's family to honour their choice," she said.

The new registry website also offers the option for sharing donation decisions using Facebook, Twitter or email to help encourage friends and family to register as well.

"Your decision to register your intent to be a donor is truly the gift of life because one organ donor can save up to eight lives," said Dr. Brendan McCarthy, medical director, Transplant Manitoba Gift of Life Program. "Sharing that decision with your loved ones remains the most important step so they can give consent to donate on your behalf when you are not able to speak for yourself."

"Even in cases where one is not able to be an organ donor, a person may be able to dramatically change the life of up to 80 people through the gift of donated tissues such as eyes, bone and skin," said Chris Snow, director, Tissue Bank Manitoba.

“Manitobans are among the most generous people in Canada and that is no different when it comes to organ donation,” said Health Minister Theresa Oswald, who signed up Selinger and others as the first Manitobans to register their wish to be an organ and tissue donor online. “I urge all Manitobans to spend just a few minutes to register as an organ and tissue donor at SignUpForLife.ca. There are people waiting for you to make this incredible gift that will change their life.”

To further raise awareness of organ and tissue donation, the Legislative Building will be lit in green, the international colour of organ donation, this evening after sundown.

SignUpForLife.ca also allows individuals to register their preference for donating their body and organs for scientific research and medical education. Manitobans continue to have the option of signing their Manitoba Health cards or the blue donor card distributed by Manitoba Public Insurance. For more information, or to register your intent to make an organ and tissue donation, visit www.SignUpForLife.ca.