
**Report to
The Vermont Legislature**

**Organ and Tissue Donation Workgroup Final Report
2019 Report to the Legislature**

**In Accordance with Act 42, 2015, Section 1
*An act relating to the Organ and Tissue Donation Working Group***

Submitted to: House Committee on Human Services
Senate Committee on Health and Welfare

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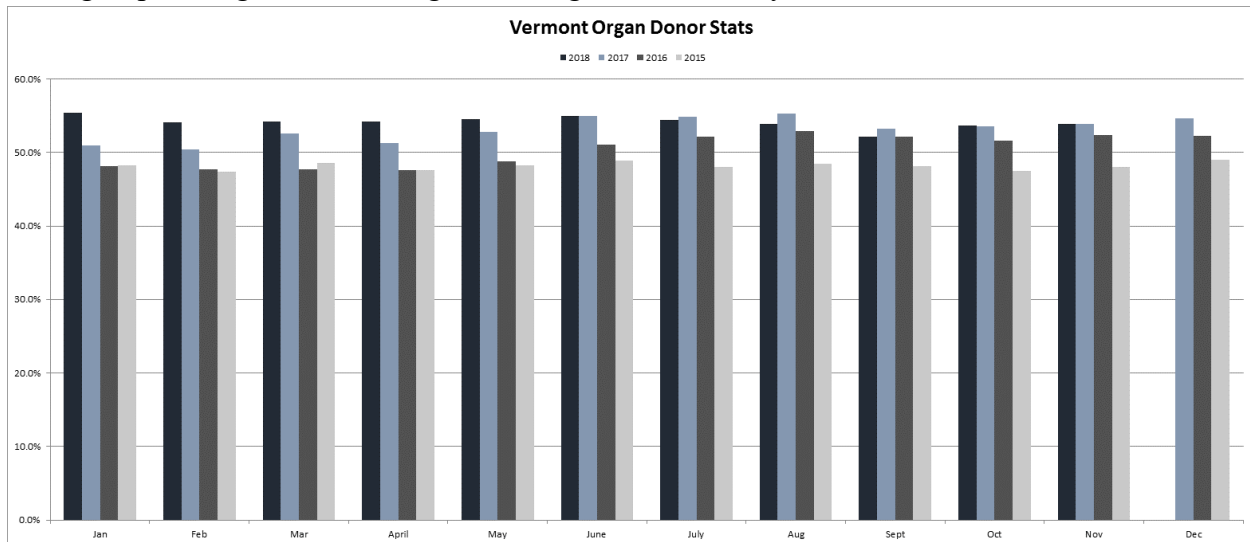
Introduction

This report outlines the activities, progress and recommendations of the Vermont Organ and Tissue Donation Workgroup. The Workgroup was originally established by Act 32 (2013) and renewed by Act 42 (2015). This report is in response to Section 1 of Act 42 (2015). Reports from previous years can be found at http://healthvermont.gov/admin/legislature/leg_reports.aspx.

The primary purpose of the Workgroup is to make recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor related to organ and tissue donations. The Workgroup met three times in 2018, January, March, and November.

Vermont Organ Donor Registration Update

The Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles has been a key partner since the inception of this Workgroup. In 2014, the DMV implemented a system of proactively asking each individual at the time of licensing whether they wanted to become an organ donor. Since that time registration rose from 7% to around 50%. In the past year the percentage has plateaued at 53%. The Workgroup has a goal of reaching 60%, a figure achieved by at least one other state.



The DMV plays an essential role in recruiting registered organ donors since 97% of all people who register as organ and tissue donors do so during one of the licensing processes.

Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations from the Workgroup.

1. **Continue an ongoing Vermont Organ and Tissue Donation Workgroup with three meetings annually.** The Workgroup has made significant progress in donor registration, but there is much more work to be done to meet the needs of Vermonters waiting for organ and tissue donations.
2. **Continue to find and recommend strategies to increase organ donor registration.**
 - a. Work with regional Department of Motor Vehicles offices where uptake is lower than the state average to assess and address any systems that may be inhibiting registration.
 - b. Outreach directly to older Vermonters. National data show that older Americans register at lower rates.
 - i. There may be some limited funds to complete this campaign.
 - c. As part of greater systems change at the Department of Motor Vehicles, change the process for registration at the time of renewal so that each time a Vermonter renews their license they do not have to re-answer the organ donation question. Transition into a ‘Yes’ carryover with the option to change as opposed to no default answer.
 - d. Encourage and assist the DMV as possible during the ongoing transition to online registration processes and the ability for the customer to designate themselves as an organ donor
 - e. Investigate additional venues, such as Vermont Health Connect, where a link to Donate Life Vermont can be prominently displayed.
3. **Participate in the national Donate Life month in April.** The Workgroup will meet again in March to determine what specific activities to recommend.
4. **Participate in the annual Spare Parts Team for the Burlington City Marathon.**
5. **Explore policy options to increase funding to reimburse basic expenses for live organ donors.** Continue to pursue legislation permitting voluntary contributions on the Vermont income tax form (line 29) to provide funds to reimburse uninsured donor expenses for live organ (typically kidney) donations. In addition, explore whether this fund could also support expenses for organ donor recruitment strategies