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Media Release

York Central Hospital Supports Patients and Families Who Choose Organ and Tissue Donation!

Richmond Hill, ON: Each year, thousands of Ontarians get a second chance to live life to its fullest, thanks to the kindness of people who have given the gift of life by donating their organs and/or tissue. But many more are still waiting. All too often lives are lost because suitable donors are not found in time. Many people will spend months, and in some cases years, waiting for a second chance because the need for organs and tissue in Ontario continues to outweigh their availability. It doesn't have to be this way, if you would like to become an organ donor talk to your family about your decision to give life. One conversation can make all the difference for the future.

“Organ and tissue donation are crucial to saving the lives of many people across the province each year,” says **Judy Cooper**, the hospital’s Manager of the Intensive Care and Coronary Care Units. “We often have patients who would be perfect candidates for donation, however families are unsure of their loved ones wishes, and this makes the decision to donate very stressful. Talk to your family about your wishes. If something should happen to you, they will appreciate knowing how you feel about donation.”

Organ Donation:

Organ transplantation has evolved from an experimental treatment to the treatment of choice for thousands of Ontarians who await the gift of life. Unfortunately the supply of solid organs for transplantation has not met the demand and has remained relatively unchanged over the past decade.

Tissue Donation:

Every year, more than 2,000 people in Ontario have their lives enhanced or saved through transplantation of donated tissue. These are people who can see again thanks to cornea transplants, whose heart function is improved with valve transplants, who can get around on their own, their mobility restored by bone grafts, or those for whom skin grafts speed recovery from burns or accidents.

“York Central Hospital is very supportive of organ and tissue donation and transplantation,” says Organ and Tissue, Coordinator from Trillium Gift of Life. **Cathy Weatherall**. “In the last year, we have worked closely with the hospital, their patients and families to save lives by sharing the gift of life, including transplantation of nine organs.”

Why consider a donation?

- Everyone is a potential organ and tissue donor, regardless of their age. To date, the oldest Canadian organ donor was over 90 years of age while the oldest tissue donor was 102 years old.
- Recovery of organs and tissue is carried out with respect and dignity. It does not interfere with funeral practices and no one will know about your gift of life unless your family tells them.

- Organs and tissue that can be donated after death include the heart, liver, kidneys, pancreas, lungs, small bowel, stomach, corneas, heart valves, bone and skin.
- Studies show that donating the organs and tissue of a loved one who has died can provide immediate comfort and long-lasting consolation to family members in their grieving.

Who:

- **Javier Santamaria** (non-directed live kidney donor) will share his reasons for deciding to donate a kidney anonymously to someone he does not know. His wife, **Laura Bird**, (singer) wrote a song about their family experience with organ donation and she will perform it for us;
- **Dr. Paul Woo**, York Central Family Physician who received a kidney in 2001;
- Representatives from Trillium Gift and Life and York Central Hospital's Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Committee will be available for comment after each presentation.

Where: 2LM conference room, Centre for Continuing Care and Rehabilitation, York Central Hospital
10 Trench St.

When: First session: 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and second session 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

For further information on organ and tissue donation, please see: www.giftoflife.on.ca.

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