



# *Saratoga County Clerk's Office*

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## **County Clerk Craig Hayner announces start of Donate Life Month** *Initiative aims to encourage organ donation enrollment*

BALLSTON SPA – Saratoga County Clerk Craig A. Hayner today announced the kickoff of a month-long initiative to encourage residents to register as organ donors when they visit any of the three Saratoga County DMV locations.

The Saratoga County DMV partners with Donate Life New York State each year to recognize April as National Donate Life Month, an annual observance highlighting the critical need for increased organ, eye, and tissue donation in the state. Donate Life NYS operates the New York State Donate Life Registry, an electronic database that documents a person's consent to be an organ, eye, and tissue donor upon their death, under contract with the State of New York.

"We are proud to support Donate Life New York State in its mission to grow the organ donor database," Hayner said. "While thousands of lives are saved through organ donation, far too many remain on the waitlist. It makes our efforts to educate people and increase enrollment that much more crucial."

Nearly 3,400 lifesaving organ transplants were performed in the state last year. However, more than 8,100 New Yorkers are on the national organ transplant waitlist. In 2022, more than 400 patients awaiting an organ transplant in New York State died because the organ needed to save their lives was not donated in time.

The theme of 2023's Donate Life Month, "Make a Splash," was inspired by the natural world of a pond coming to life in the spring. Throughout the month of April, the Saratoga County DMV urges all residents to "make a splash" by enrolling in the registry when conducting a license, permit, or non-driver ID transaction. Promotional items and decorations will be on display at all three Saratoga County DMV locations throughout National Donate Life Month as a reminder of the importance of the gift of life.

As part of the local effort, the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors earlier this month unanimously passed a resolution recognizing April as Donate Life Month, encouraging staff members of Saratoga County departments and agencies to participate in the Donate Life's "Blue and Green Day," which is April 14.

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Saratoga County's enrollment has increased steadily in the years since the County DMV began promoting Donate Life Month in 2014. According to the most recent statistics from Donate Life NYS, at the end of 2022, 67% of the eligible population in Saratoga County was enrolled in the registry. Over the years, Saratoga County has seen a steady uptick in donor registry enrollment, rising from 39% in 2013 to about 54% in 2018 and over 61% in 2020.

"It's remarkable to see the rise in organ donor enrollments in Saratoga County over the past several years," Hayner said. "Our significant growth reflects the generosity of the people of Saratoga County. My hope is that we can continue to increase enrollment and help reduce the number of people waiting for life-saving organ transplants."

By contrast, approximately 46% of New Yorkers statewide are enrolled in the New York State Donate Life Registry. While more than 7.2 million New Yorkers are registered donors, this represents the third lowest percentage of registered donors in the country (behind California and Texas).

Statewide, 83% of donors sign up while completing a transaction at a DMV.

"DMVs throughout the state have already helped nearly 6 million New Yorkers enroll in the New York State Donate Life Registry. By providing the opportunity for the public to enroll in the NYS Donate Life Registry, they are the key to saving and healing the lives of the thousands of New Yorkers in need of a transplant," said Aisha Tator, executive director of Donate Life NYS.

All New Yorkers aged 16 and older can enroll in the New York State Donor Registry, regardless of their medical history. The enrollment option is available on forms used to apply for or renew a driver's license or non-driver identification card. New Yorkers can also enroll in the registry while applying for health insurance through the New York State of Health and on voter registration forms. In addition, online enrollment is available at any time at [donatelife.ny.gov/register](https://donatelife.ny.gov/register).

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