



Student Nurses Association advocates organ donation

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The Student Nurses Association will be on the Quad until November 14, asking ISU students, faculty and staff members to become post-mortem organ donors.

"We're trying to raise awareness for organ donation," Amanda Whitley, a senior nursing major, said. "It is our obligation as nurses to promote it."

ISU associates may also register to become donors at their local driver's facility or online at donatelifeillinois.org.

"All you need is a driver's license or a state ID," Whitley said.

Those who signed the back of their driver's license before Jan. 1, 2006 must re-register with the Secretary of State's office.

"On Jan. 1, 2006, Secretary White drew [up] legislation that established the First Person Organ and Tissue Donation Registry," Henry Haupt, media representative for the Illinois Secretary of State office, said.

"If you wish to be an organ donor and you are on the FPOTDR, your wish will be granted."

Prior to Jan. 1, 2006, family members of the deceased donors had to approve their loved ones' wish to donate.

"In about 20 percent of the cases, family members of the loved ones said they didn't want their organs to be donated," Haupt said. "Oftentimes the family members regretted that decision."

Over 3.8 million people have registered or re-registered since Jan. 1, 2006, making up over half of the 6.2 million people in total who have already registered to be organ and tissue donors in Illinois.

The legislation for first person consent made Illinois one of a few states in which such a program to exists.

"A lot of peoples' wishes weren't being honored by their family members," Whitley explained. "A lot of issues and misunderstandings went into it."

Whitley explained that family members may have gone against their loved ones' decision due to religious beliefs, rumors, grief or the fear that their loved one would not be able to have an open casket. The rumors, she said, are untrue.

Drive participant and junior philosophy major Amanda Gedraitis is an advocate for living donation.

"I didn't know there was such a thing as living donation until I was about 18," she said.

After two years of research, Gedraitis chose to have her surgery done at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago, which boasts a 100 percent success rate for kidney donation.

The hospital sent Gedraitis written information about being a living organ and tissue donor. After she accepted, Gedraitis underwent a physical and psychological testing before the surgery.

"They do a complete health history of you and your family to clear you of any illnesses. They make sure you're really healthy ... and have a decent support network ... before you donate."

Whitley explained that there are no recent statistics of living and deceased donors at ISU, but students have been proactive about donating their organs after they die.

"There are thousands of people waiting for transplants," Whitley said. "If a person becomes an organ donor, he or she can save 25 lives."