

February 2019 | A periodic e-bulletin to share results of organ donation and transplantation projects funded by the Division of Transplantation.

Direct Mail Still Delivers



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A meta-analysis of past studies confirms the effectiveness of direct mail

In the age of email and social media, it's easy to forget about postal mail as a means of communication. However, a study funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration's Division of Transplantation confirmed that direct mail campaigns are still an effective way to promote organ donation and, that when you crunch the numbers, they're surprisingly cost-effective.

As part of a direct mail project with the **Finger Lakes Donor Recovery Network**, **Thomas Feeley of the State University of New York at Buffalo** conducted a meta-analysis of research on the effects of direct mail to promote organ donation registration. The analysis indicated direct mail campaigns seeking to enroll individuals to state registries yielded a 3% registration rate. **Collectively, the 15 direct mail campaigns he reviewed resulted in more than 10,800 donor registrations.**

Strategies that work:

- Conducting direct mail campaigns to all age groups
- Authoring letters from a state government office (i.e., department of health, secretary of state)
- Providing an online registration option in the letter



While there was no significant overall difference between the type of mailing (brochure only, letter only, or letter and brochure) and the registration rate, the age of the target group did make a big difference, with the seven campaigns targeting ages 18–34 yielding higher rates (6%) than the eight campaigns targeting ages 50–64 (2%). Members of the older age group traditionally are less likely than their younger counterparts to register as donors, due possibly to their perceived health inadequacies or perhaps simply because they erroneously believe their organs are too old.

In addition, the source of the letter also proved to be important. Mailings sent by state government offices yielded higher donor registration rates (5%) than those sent by non-government donation organizations (2%).

While these rates may appear low, national estimates give the cost of each new registrant obtained from direct mail at only \$7.20.



“The use of direct mail to promote organ donor registration is an inexpensive and efficacious method to increase enrollments in state registries,” said Feeley. “Organ donation practitioners should seek to partner with state government authorities as they strive to increase registration rates among their target audiences.”

Learn more about this project using the resources below.

Want to know more?

Effective Campaign Strategies for Promoting Organ Donation to Mature Adults: A Multi-State Intervention

Principal Investigator: Brian Quick, Ph.D, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, bquick@illinois.edu, 217.333.2683

Principal Researcher: Thomas Feeley, Ph.D, State University of New York at Buffalo, thfeeley@buffalo.edu, 716.645.1160

Feeley TH, Quick BL, Lee S. Using direct mail to promote organ donor registration; Two campaigns and a meta-analysis. *Clinical Transplantation*. 2016. Vol 30: 1564-1569.

Quick BL, Reynolds-Tylus T, Fico AE, Feeley TH. An investigation into mature adults' attitudinal reluctance to register as organ donors. *Clinical Transplantation*. 2016. Vol 30: 1250-1257.

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