

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

Donation Videos in Driving Schools Steer Teens to Consider Donation

Massachusetts project finds testimonial videos boost designation rates by up to 14%



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Teens are an important target for organ donation education, and most U.S. teens between the ages of 15 and 18 are asked to make a donor designation decision when they receive their first driver's license. In a study funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration's Division of Transplantation, researchers at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston showed videos about donation to teens at six Massachusetts driving schools and saw an impact.

The teens viewed one of three six-minute videos featuring people their age. The videos were either informational (facts about donation), testimonial, or blended (a combination of informational and testimonial). The testimonials featured people whose lives were saved by receiving donated organs or family members of people who saved lives by donating organs.

Of the teens who watched any of the videos, 60% joined the donor registry – versus 50% of teens who didn't see a video. Even more notably, donor designation rates were significantly higher for teens who viewed the testimonial video (64%) or the blended video (65%) than for those who viewed the informational video (51%).

This suggests that testimonials create a sustained emotional appeal, as evidenced in the study by a higher likelihood of teens to have donation discussions with their parents after watching the testimonial video. The study results also indicate that driving schools are feasible and efficient venues for showing brief donation videos to teens.

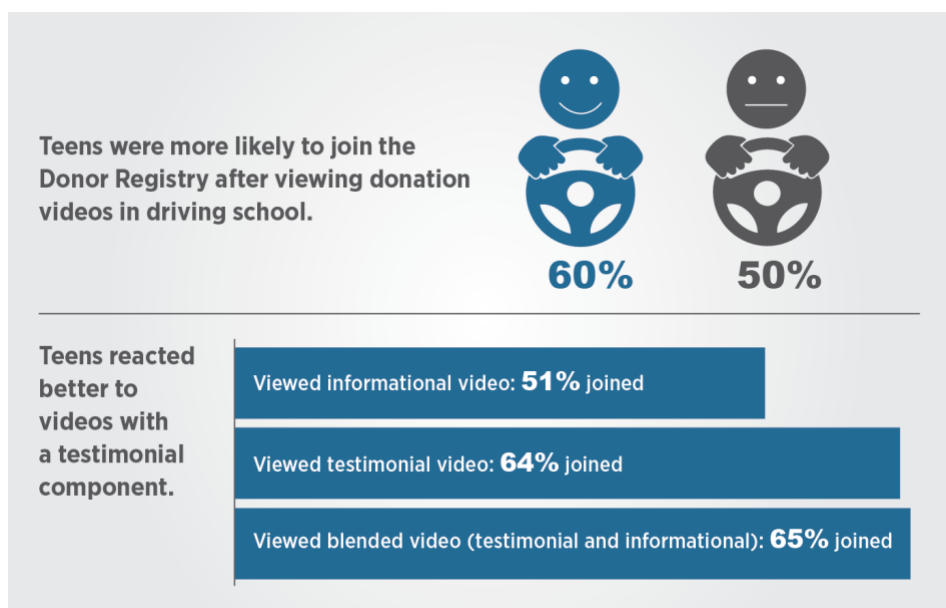
Strategies that Work

- Showing donation videos to teens in driving school
- Featuring testimonials from teenagers in the videos



Based on donor designation rates in the study, exposing all teens to testimonial messaging about donation prior to getting their first driver's license has the potential to yield an additional 2,000 registered donors annually in the state of Massachusetts alone.

Note: Currently, 47 states allow 16- and 17-year-olds to register as organ donors. Other states require teens to be 18.



“Testimonial messaging as part of a driving course is a very effective way to drive up rates of organ donation,” says lead researcher Dr. Jim Rodrigue, who is vice chair of clinical research in the Department of Surgery at Beth Israel and a professor at Harvard Medical School. “We were struck by the overwhelmingly enthusiastic cooperation of the driving instructors we worked with, a number of whom told us they’d learned a lot about organ donation by opening up their classrooms to the study.”

“States require that information about organ donation be presented at driver-education courses. This study shows that to be maximally effective, it should be testimonial in nature and come from the students’ peers,” says study co-researcher Matt Boger of New England Donor Services, which provides for organ procurement in Massachusetts. “Educating people about organ donation when they’re young instills attitudes that will last throughout their lifetime.”

Learn more about this project using the resources below. If you would like to replicate this program, you will find a [selection of organ donation videos](#) at organdonor.gov. To learn more about organ, eye and tissue donation, please visit organdonor.gov.

Want to know more?

Increasing Donor Designation Rates in Teenagers: Effectiveness of a Driver's Education Intervention

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Rodrigue JR, Cornell DL, Howard RJ. Organ donation decision: comparison of donor and nondonor families. *Am J Transplant*. 2006; 6:190-8. Article is available online at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1600-6143.2005.01130.x>.

Rodrigue JR, Fleishman A, Fitzpatrick S, Boger M. Organ donation video messaging in motor vehicle offices: results of a randomized trial. *Prog Transplant*. 2015; 25:332-8.

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