

MARCH 2017 | A periodic e-bulletin to share results of organ donation and transplantation projects funded by the Division of Transplantation.

Driving Donation Decisions at DMVs | Part 2

The second in a two-part series featuring the results of DMV-focused Division of Transplantation grant projects.

Point-of-decision materials work best when combined with other tactics

A Purdue University and Gift of Life Michigan grant project featuring radio ads and billboards, point-of-decision materials at DMVs, and volunteers added 60,000 donor registrations to the Michigan state registry in 2008 and 2009. The point-of-decision materials were the catalyst for growth in registrations, according to Tim Makinen, communications director for Gift of Life Michigan, but having volunteers at the DMVs was critical.

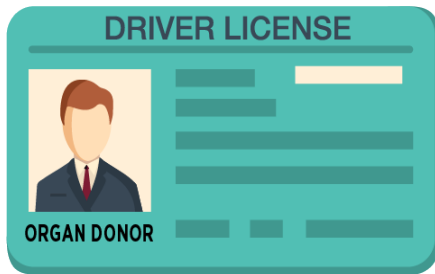
Strategies that work:

- Point-of-decision materials combined with personal interaction with DMV customers and staff or staff training
- Mandating that DMV staff ask the donor registration question to every customer



“The volunteers were in there encouraging customers to tell the clerk they wanted to join. We had not had that presence before and we noticed an immediate increase in the offices where we had the volunteers and point-of-decision materials together,” Makinen said. **Donor designations increased by 200 percent with point-of-decision materials and by nearly 400 percent with the materials and**

volunteers.



Volunteers encouraged customers to register and showed support and gratitude to DMV staff. The volunteer presence and the positive results also helped strengthen Gift of Life's relationship with the Secretary of State's office, the office that runs the DMVs.

Gift of Life now has volunteers at every DMV in the state in April. Throughout the year, about a dozen volunteers a month visit DMVs. Gift of Life continues to distribute point-of-decision materials to DMVs, including carpet mats, counter stickers, table tents, and stickers for customers. Makinen said during the grant project the media campaign reinforced the messaging but it was difficult to measure any direct effect from the media on donor registrations.

Staff training boosted registration rates

When **New York Alliance for Donation and the State University of New York at Buffalo** tested how effective posters and brochures were at DMVs in New York, they found no impact on donor registrations. However, there was a small increase in donor registrations around the time offices were displaying materials and participating in staff training. When training ended, the increase went back down, reinforcing the need for sustained involvement with DMV staff.

"There is benefit to educating motor vehicle representatives about organ donation but we think the most benefit would be from having a regular presence among them and some sort of recognition for the work that they're doing," said Melanie Evans, principal investigator and associate director at New York Alliance for Donation. "I think point-of-decision materials could be effective, but there is already a lot of signage on the walls."

An important outcome from the grant project was what they learned from exit surveys with DMV customers and staff. Many DMV customers interviewed said they did not register because they didn't know they could. And a significant portion of DMV staff interviewed said they didn't point out the donor designation question on the form even if the customer left it blank.

This helped New York Alliance for Donation make the case for mandating that the question be answered. Beginning in 2015, if a New York customer doesn't answer the question on the form, the DMV staff member has to point it out. In the nine months since it was mandated, New York's donor designation rate has increased

from 10 percent to 17 percent, which amounts to 170,000 additional donors.

Learn more about these projects using the resources below.

Want to know more?

Show Us Your Heart: Secretary of State/DMV Point-of-Decision Grassroots and Media Campaign

Principal Investigator: Tyler R. Harrison, University of Miami, harrison@miami.edu

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Harrison, T. R., Morgan, S. E., King, A. J., Di Corcia, M. J., Williams, E. A., Ivic, R. K., & Hopeck, P. (2010). Promoting the Michigan Organ Donor Registry: Evaluating the impact of a multi-faceted intervention utilizing media priming and communication design. *Health Communication*, 25, 700-708.

Harrison, T. R., Morgan, S. E., King, A. J., & Williams, E. A. (2011). Saving lives branch by branch: The effectiveness of driver licensing bureau campaigns to promote organ donor registry sign-ups to African Americans in Michigan. *Journal of Health Communication*, 16(8), 805 – 819.

A DMV-Based Intervention to Increase Organ Donation in New York State

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Feeley T, Reynolds-Tilus T, Anker A, Evans M. Reasons for (not) signing the state registry: surveying Department of Motor Vehicles customers in New York state. *Progress in Transplantation*. 2014. Vol 24: 97-106.