



## TALKING POINTS- ETHNIC MINORITIES AND DONATION

- Ethnic minorities are facing a public health crisis and are in desperate need of more organ, eye, and tissue donors.
- Ethnic Minorities make up over 30% of the US population but comprise 53% of individuals on the national organ transplant waiting list. (More than half of the national transplant waiting list is made up of multicultural populations). Most people are not aware of the large number of minorities who are waiting for a transplant.
- Nearly 2,000 of our Northwest neighbors are waiting for a life-saving organ transplant, 30% of which are minorities.
- This disparity happens for a number of reasons, including:
  - Many of the conditions leading to the need for a transplant- such as diabetes and hypertension- occur with greater frequency among minority populations.
  - For example, African Americans and other minorities are three times more likely to suffer from end-stage renal disease than Caucasians.
  - Although it is possible for a candidate to match a donor from another ethnic group, transplant success rates increase when organs are matched between members of the same ethnic background.
  - 25% of donors are minorities. The lack of organs donated by ethnic minorities contributes to longer waiting periods and higher death rates in communities of color.
- There is a perception that minorities do not have equal access to organ transplants. The fact is a national database and strict federal, regional and local systems are in place to ensure ethical and equitable distribution of organs.
- Organs are allocated based on the recipient's blood type, body size, medical urgency, length of time on the waiting list and proximity to transplant center.
- Most major religions in the US support organ, eye, and tissue donation as one of the highest expressions of compassion and generosity.
- Donated organs are removed surgically, in an operation similar to open heart surgery. Donation does not change the appearance of the body for the funeral service.
- Mistrust of the health care system among ethnic minorities is due to the history of discriminating behavior in the medical profession. Our goal is to provide fair practices and accurate information in partnership with communities of color to increase trust and make a positive impact on this health crisis.
- To ensure your family and friends know your donation wishes, talk to them about your decision.