



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Wednesday, April 14, 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR: HEADS AND DEPARTMENTS OF AGENCIES

FROM: KAY COLES JAMES
DIRECTOR

Subject: National Donate Life Month, 2004

April is National Donate Life Month. Our Nation's organ and tissue donor program is an important part of our healthcare system. But there are simply not enough organ and tissue donors. Each day, about 70 Americans receive a transplant, but another 16 on the waiting list die because not enough organs are available, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. Over 84,000 people are now on the waiting list.

I strongly encourage agencies to make information available for Federal employees to seriously consider how they may help fill a critical need. Employees can learn about organ and tissue donation by going to organdonor.gov/signup1.html. There they can download an Organ/Tissue Donor Card and sign up to become a donor. Or they can call 1.888.ASK.HRSA for information about becoming a donor.

The Government's leave programs support organ donation. An employee may use up to 7 days of paid leave each calendar year to serve as a bone-marrow donor. An employee also may use up to 30 days of paid leave each calendar year to serve as an organ donor. Leave for bone marrow and organ donation is a separate category of leave that is available in addition to annual and sick leave.

The length of absence for organ donation procedures will vary depending upon the medical circumstances of each case. For medical procedures and recuperation requiring absences longer than 30 days, we encourage agencies to continue to accommodate employees by granting additional time off in the form of sick and/or annual leave, advanced sick and/or annual leave, donated annual leave from the agency's leave transfer or leave bank programs, or leave without pay.

For additional information on leave for bone-marrow and organ donation, agency Chief Human Capital Officers and Human Resources Directors may contact their assigned OPM Human Capital Officers. Employees should contact their agency human resources offices for assistance.

The Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program also supports organ donation for both patients and donors. There are about 200 health plan choices nationwide. While specific benefits vary among plans, FEHB covers non-experimental transplants such as cornea, heart, kidney, pancreas, lung, liver, and small intestine transplants. In addition, FEHB members are covered for

the actual donor's related medical and hospital expenses (if they are not otherwise covered) even if the donor is not an FEHB member.

OPM's HealthierFeds campaign includes information on health education and awareness and is on our website at HealthierFeds.opm.gov. This campaign fully supports President Bush's HealthierUS initiative for a healthier America (HealthierUS.gov) and the Steps to a HealthierUS, led by Secretary Tommy G. Thompson of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Together, we can help save so many lives. Please help solve this national problem -- carry a donor card. I do!

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers
Human Resources Directors

To News Release