

Simple Solution to Organ Shortage

by David J. Undis

Chris Klug was very lucky to get a liver transplant (Olympic Medalist Comes Back to Bend to For Book Signing - 7/13/2006). Over half of the 92,000 Americans on the national waiting list will die before they get a transplant. Most of these deaths are needless. Americans bury or cremate about 20,000 transplantable organs every year. Over 6,000 of their neighbors die every year as a result. There is a simple solution to the organ shortage -- give organs first to people who have agreed to donate their own organs when they die. Giving organs first to organ donors will convince more people to register as organ donors. It will also make the organ allocation system fairer. About 60% of the organs transplanted in the United States go to people who haven't agreed to donate their own organs when they die. People who aren't prepared to share the gift of life should go to the back of the transplant waiting list as long as there is a shortage of organs. Anyone who wants to donate their organs to others who have agreed to donate theirs can join LifeSharers. LifeSharers is a non-profit network of organ donors who agree to offer their organs first to other organ donors when they die. They do this through a form of directed donation that is legal in all 50 states and under federal law. Anyone can join for free at www.lifesharers.org or by calling 1-888-ORGAN88. LifeSharers has 5,396 members, including 80 members in Oregon. Over 500 of our members are minor children enrolled by their parents.

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