



# 2020 Annual Report

Summary of IDPH Activities

**Bureau of Substance Abuse**

**In partnership with the Iowa Donor Network and the Lions Eye Bank**

**December 2020**

**Iowa Department of Public Health**  
Protecting and Improving the Health of Iowans



## Acknowledgements

Iowa Department of Public Health. Bureau of Substance Abuse. Des Moines: Iowa Dept. of Public Health, 2020. Web. <http://idph.iowa.gov/anatomical-gift>.

Gov. Kim Reynolds  
Lt. Gov. Adam Gregg  
Interim IDPH Director Kelly Garcia

Report Contact Information:  
Sherry L. Frizell  
[Sherry.Frizell@idph.iowa.gov](mailto:Sherry.Frizell@idph.iowa.gov)  
515-218-5926

**Introduction**

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In 1996, the Iowa Legislature created the Anatomical Gift Public Awareness and Transplantation Fund. County treasurers seek contributions to the fund when Iowans register or renew motor vehicle registrations. In 2004, an organ and tissue donation awareness license plate was created for Iowa motorists. A \$35 charge for the plate plus \$10 renewal fee, in addition to the normal fee, is provided to the awareness fund.

Iowa is served by a single organ procurement organization, the Iowa Donor Network (IDN), and one eye recovery agency, the Iowa Lions Eye Bank (ILEB). Through a contract with ILEB, IDN serves as Iowa’s human tissue (eyes, bone, skin, tendons and heart valves) referral agency. ILEB conducts cornea recovery, processing, evaluation and distribution services. Both organizations cooperate closely with Iowa hospitals, hospice and emergency medical services, as well as the public, to promote and accomplish organ, tissue and eye donations.

Iowa Code Chapter 142C.17 requires the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), in conjunction with any statewide organ procurement organization, to submit an annual donation and compliance report.

**Organs, Tissues, and Eye Donors**

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The number of Iowa organ and tissue donors for January through September of each year is as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b><i>Organ</i> Donors</b>	<b><i>Tissue</i> Donors</b>
2020	72	659
2019	66	689
2018	50	619
2017	39	600
2016	40	636

The number of eye transplant and research donors, January through September:

<b>Year</b>	<b><i>Eye Transplant</i> Donors</b>	<b><i>Eye Research</i> Donors</b>
2020	447	161
2019	515	174
2018	552	176
2017	763	180
2016	781	161

## Organ, Tissue, and Eye Donors

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Consistent with requirements of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), IDN receives a referral call on every death in Iowa hospitals. Not every referral results in a donation; consent for donation and medical suitability must also be considered. Of note, IDN was forced to scale-back recovery of donated tissue for implant when cutbacks in elective and outpatient surgery were ordered on a statewide and national basis in order to conserve PPE (Personal Protective Equipment).

On average, **each tissue donor** provides enough transplantable tissue for up to 75 people. Eye donations for transplant decreased by 13% in 2020 and research donations decreased by 7.5%. The decrease in the number of eye transplant donors can be attributed to widespread national cancellations of cornea transplant surgeries in March, April and May due to COVID-19. ILEB instituted a deliberate scale-back in eye donation recoveries to ensure that all recovered corneas could be placed with and used by surgeons and were not wasted during a period of diminished demand. On average, **each eye donation** provides sight to two people and provides additional tissue for up to eight scleral patch grafts for eye traumas and glaucoma shunt surgeries. ILEB and the University of Iowa Institute for Vision Research (IVR) use eyes donated to research by Iowans to develop new transplant techniques and potential treatments for blinding eye disease. ILEB is pursuing ground-breaking research through the philanthropically funded Cornea Research Center, focused on the metabolic functioning of ocular tissue with a goal of identifying tissue that will most successfully restore sight. IVR makes research tissue from Iowans available to their programs: Carver Family Center for Macular Degeneration; Glaucoma Research; Pediatric Genetics; Center for Bioinformatics and Computational Biology Visual Rehabilitation/Disability; Program in Stem Cell Biology; and the VA Center for Prevention and Treatment of Visual Loss. Through the generous gift by Iowans of ocular tissue for research, the precious gift of answers to the goal of eliminating blinding eye disease will be a reality in the future.

## Medicare Rules

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In August 1998, the Health Care Financing Administration (now CMS) promulgated regulations designed to increase organ tissue and eye donation. The rules, part of the Hospital Conditions of Participation for the Medicare and Medicaid Programs, require "a hospital to have an agreement with the Organ Procurement Organization (OPO) designated by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), under which the hospital will contact the OPO in a timely manner about individuals who die, or whose deaths are imminent in the hospital. The OPO will then determine each individual's medical suitability for donation. The hospital must also have an agreement with at least one tissue bank and at least one eye bank to cooperate in the retrieval, processing, preservation, storage and distribution of tissue and eyes, as long as the agreement does not interfere with organ donation. The final rule requires a hospital to ensure, in collaboration with the OPO with which it has an agreement; the family of every potential donor is informed of its option to donate organs or tissues or eyes, or not to donate."

### **Iowa Administrative Rules**

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On November 16, 2016, Iowa Administrative Rules 641.122 went into effect. The rules outline the current practices for the distribution of funds through competitive grant opportunities. IDPH may offer competitive grant opportunities to Iowa hospitals, non-profit agencies and state agencies for funds for projects that increase public awareness and encourage Iowans to register as a donor.

### **Contributions**

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Contributions provided through county treasurers and the license plate program to the Anatomical Gift Public Awareness and Transplantation Funds totaled \$112,043 in Fiscal Year 2019. This is \$4,837 more than provided in Fiscal Year 2018, a slight increase for a steady rate of \$0.035 per capita (based on July 1, 2017, estimated population of 3,145,711 as per the U.S. Census Bureau). County treasurers, IDN, ILEB and IDPH continue to explore ways to increase awareness of the contribution opportunity and contributions to the fund.

### **Community Grants**

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To date, payment from the Anatomical Gift Public Awareness and Transplantation Fund for Fiscal Year 2019 totals \$66,864. This includes administrative expenses, public awareness activities, and organ transplantation procedures and related patient costs. Of these payments, individual transplant recipient and donor reimbursements totaled \$63,192, IDN receiving a \$3,000 performance measure incentive, and IDPH administrative costs at \$672.

### **Donor Registry**

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Chapter 1052, Acts of the 2000 General Assembly, authorized the director of IDPH to contract for the establishment of a statewide organ and tissue donor registry. The contract provides for a centralized database and automated system to make organ, tissue and eye donor information available to family members and physicians seven days a week, 24 hours a day. IDN launched the Iowa Donor Registry ([www.iowadonorregistry.org](http://www.iowadonorregistry.org)) on March 18, 2002. To date, more than 1.8 million Iowans have registered their intention to become organ, tissue and eye donors upon death. In 2007, the Revised Uniform Anatomical Gift Act was passed by the legislature requiring the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) to provide the Iowa Donor Registry a listing of every Iowan who marked “yes” to donation on a license, permit or identification card. DOT provides monthly downloads to the Iowa Donor Registry as legal consent for donation according to Iowa law. This important legislation increased the number of registrants in the Iowa Donor Registry from an average of 2,000 entries per month to over 30,000 per month. Through digital efforts, IDN has also seen an increase in the number of Iowans registering online. On average, 230 people are registering online per month.

## 2020 Anatomical Gift Public Awareness Annual Donation and Compliance Report

On May 6, 2019, Senate File 86, “Logan’s Law” went into effect. This law requires the Department of Natural Resources to include anatomical donor symbols on hunting, fishing and fur harvesting licenses. Applications for these licenses now include a section where the applicant may register as an anatomical gift donor. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources provides monthly downloads to IDN. Within the first (1) year of Logan’s Law being enacted, over 2900 new donors were added to the Iowa Donor Registry.

As of November 2020, 77% of adult Iowans are registered donors. This outpaces most states and the national average of 58% of all Americans 18 years and older.

### Iowa Donor Registry Appropriation

During the 2019 Iowa Legislative session, Senate File 766 appropriated \$100,000 to ensure continued accessibility to IDN on a 24/7 basis.

These monies allow a procurement organization to determine whether a donor or prospective donor has made, amended or revoked an anatomical gift. The Registry is also able to compile donation information received by the state DOT, county treasurers and the Iowa Donor Network.

### **Summary**

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Organ, tissue and eye donation programs continue to serve a significant number of Iowans. As of December 2020, 565 people in Iowa are waiting for lifesaving organ transplants. New corneal transplant techniques are being performed earlier in the course of a blinding eye disease, increasing the demand for corneal tissue. Researchers are utilizing eye tissue more effectively to find cures for blindness. Efforts to increase public awareness and acceptance of organ, tissue and eye donation must continue and should be fostered by every practicing nurse, physician, social worker, paramedic, law enforcement official, hospital administrator and funeral director in Iowa. The Iowa Donor Network, the Iowa Lions Eye Bank and the Iowa Department of Public Health will continue to promote organ, tissue and eye donation, and explore ways to increase public awareness of the opportunity to donate.