

For Immediate Release

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## LifeNet Health launches One Hero campaign to increase support for organ donation in African American and Black communities

*There is a critical need for African American and Black organ and tissue donors in Virginia*

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (March 2, 2021) — LifeNet Health, Virginia’s federally designated Organ Procurement Organization (OPO), is launching a campaign focused on building support for organ and tissue donation among Black Virginians in the Richmond area with plans to expand the focus across the state. The One Hero campaign will share information about the critical need for Black organ and tissue donors and will address misconceptions around donation that have kept registration rates low in these communities.

Black patients make up nearly one-third of the approximately 108,000 adults and children on the national organ transplant waiting list. Almost half of the patients on the list in Virginia are Black. On average, at least three Virginians die each week in the state because a life-saving organ is not available in time. Increasing minority donation leads to saving the lives of Black patients who are in desperate need of a transplant. Registering as a donor is the best way to give the gift of life to a patient in need.

“There is a vital need for an increase in organ donation registration in diverse communities, especially the African American and Black communities,” said LifeNet Health Vice President and OPO Executive Director Todd Hubler. “We know that certain blood types are more prevalent in minority populations and since matching blood type is usually necessary for transplantation, it is crucial to have diversity among organ donors that reflects the needs of the waitlist in our communities.”

In 2020, LifeNet Health facilitated a record 616 organ transplants in Virginia thanks to the generosity of 237 selfless donors and their families— 58 of these donors were African American or Black. There is still a great need for more people of diverse backgrounds to register as organ and tissue donors.

The One Hero campaign website — [LifeNetHealth.org/onehero](https://LifeNetHealth.org/onehero) —highlights important facts and shares the stories of those whose lives have been affected by donation. It also includes the One Hero podcast, featuring donation-related topics and guests who will share their own stories — including experts in the field of donation healthcare, living donors, transplant recipients and others who have been impacted by donation.

“We are committed to participating in important conversations around donation within the Black and African American communities so that more people receive a second chance at life,” said LifeNet Health President and CEO Rony Thomas. “Our goal is to build trust among communities of color and to work alongside leaders to provide information that will help people say ‘yes’ to the gift of donation.”

One donor can save nine people with organ donation and give hope to more than 150 people through tissue donation. More registered donors are needed. Sign up as a donor at the Department of Motor Vehicles, or go to [LifeNetHealth.org/onehero](https://LifeNetHealth.org/onehero) to learn more and register.

#### About LifeNet Health

LifeNet Health helps save lives, restore health, and give hope to thousands each year. It is the world's most trusted provider of transplant solutions — from organ procurement to bio-implants and cellular therapies — and a leader in regenerative medicine, while always honoring the donors and healthcare professionals who enable healing. For more information about LifeNet Health, go to [www.lifenethealth.org](http://www.lifenethealth.org).

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