

## **ORGAN AND TISSUE DONOR AWARENESS**

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 1999

*Reviewed by Board of Managers March 2010*

- WHEREAS,** National PTA adopted the resolution “Awareness Program for Organ Donation and Transplantation” at its 1985 convention: and
- WHEREAS,** PTA advocacy includes actions to promote education and awareness among the general public about issues that concern the health and well-being of all children and youth; and
- WHEREAS,** The United Network for Organ Sharing reports that over 60,000 patients in the United States are currently on the waiting list for donated organs, with over 2,000 of these being children under the age of 18; and
- WHEREAS,** The California Transplant Donor network states that every two hours, someone in this country dies because of the shortage of donor organs, every 18 minutes another person’s name is added to the list of thousands who await life-saving organ transplants; and
- WHEREAS,** The Health Resources and Services Administration reports that organ and tissue transplants can improve and save lives, however, the number of individuals awaiting transplants continues to grow, and approximately 3,000 patients per year die because donor organs are not available to them; and
- WHEREAS,** Transplant Communications, Inc. states that a single donor can provide organs for up to eight people and tissue to as many as 100 people; and
- WHEREAS,** The Uniform Anatomical Gift Act allows anyone over 18 years of age to indicate their desire to be an organ donor, and parents can authorize donations on behalf of their children under the age of 18; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA encourage its units, councils and districts to promote or assist with education and awareness efforts in their local communities about the critical need for organ and tissue donors, from both living and deceased.

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## **BACKGROUND SUMMARY**

Approximately 3,000 people will die each year because of the shortage of organ donations. Nearly 60,000 patients names appear on organ donation lists, over 2,000 of these are children.

Organs that can be donated to benefit those in need include kidneys, heart, liver, intestine, lungs, and pancreas. Some body tissues can also be donated including corneas, skin, bone, middle ear, bone marrow, connective tissues, and blood vessels.

The largest number of patients on organ transplant lists are the nearly 40,000 in need of a kidney. Eleven thousand are on waiting lists for a liver. The heart transplant list, while much smaller is still over 4,000. Three thousand are on the waiting list for a lung.

The Uniform Anatomical Gift Act states anyone over 18 years can indicate the desire to be an organ donor by signing a donor card and carrying it in their wallet or by expressing their desire to have their organs donated to a family member. Relatives can donate a deceased family member's organs, even those under the age of 18. Donor cards can be obtained through the Department of Motor Vehicles, the American Red Cross, or they can also be printed from several websites.

Public awareness is an essential step toward increasing organ and tissue donation and transplantation.