FACTS

◎ Today, more than 10,000 New Yorkers are waiting for life-saving organ transplants.

◎ New Yorkers typically make up 10% of the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) national organ transplant waiting list.

◎ More than 500 New Yorkers died last year because an organ did not become available in time to save their lives.

◎ People of all ages and medical histories should consider themselves potential donors. The medical condition of the donor at the time of death will determine what organs and tissue can be donated.

◎ Organ and tissue donation becomes an option only after all life-saving measures have been taken and death has been declared. The decision to donate does not interfere with medical care.

◎ Consent for donation is confirmed, and the family is asked to participate in the process by providing a medical and social history.

◎ Surgical procedures are used to recover donated organs and tissues. Donation does not delay or change funeral arrangements, and an open casket is possible.

◎ All major religions support organ and tissue donation.

◎ There is no cost to a donor's family or estate for organ and tissue donation.

◎ Organs are distributed based on medical information like blood type, body size and tissue type matching through a national computer network operated by the UNOS. It is illegal to distribute organs based on nonmedical information such as wealth, citizenship or celebrity status.

◎ It is illegal to buy or sell organs and tissue in the United States.

◎ Donated organs, including the heart, pancreas, kidneys, liver, lungs, and intestines restore life.

◎ Tissue is needed to replace bone, tendons, and ligaments lost to trauma, cancer and other diseases in order to improve strength, mobility and independence. Corneas are needed to restore sight. Skin grafts help burn patients heal, and often mean the difference between life and death. Heart valves repair cardiac defects and damage.

◎ It is possible to donate a kidney, partial liver, lung or pancreas as a living donor.