



The foundation
of kidney care.

News Release

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The Kidney Foundation of Canada applauds recent government announcement to improve organ donation

August 13, 2008 – Montreal, Quebec - The Kidney Foundation of Canada (KFOC) applauds the federal, provincial and territorial ministries of health for their decision, announced yesterday, to create an integrated national system to improve organ donation and transplantation in Canada under the expanded mandate of the Canadian Blood Services (CBS).

"We believe that the changes underway have the potential to greatly benefit Canadians, particularly the growing community of kidney patients in need of a life-saving transplant," noted Paul Shay, the Foundation's National Executive Director. "Representatives of The Kidney Foundation were active collaborators with the Canadian Council of Donation and Transplantation during its five-year term; and we trust that the history of this relationship will continue as the Council merges with CBS. We have, in fact, been invited to – and will attend - the Canadian Blood Service's national stakeholder consultation meeting in September 2008. It bodes well."

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is particularly pleased that one of the immediate priorities will be the development of national information systems which will make it easier for living organ donors and transplant recipients to find each other. "The prioritizing of a registry for living donor paired exchange transplants is specifically significant to our community," remarked Sean Lawson, Chair of the Foundation's National Organ Donation Committee who successfully donated a kidney 15 years ago to his brother Matthew. Almost 75% of the over 4,000 Canadians on the waiting list for a transplant in December 2006 were in need of a kidney.

The Kidney Foundation not only applauds this recent government announcement, it also recognizes the value of CDDT's past work which helped identify barriers to living donation. "The need for living donors has never been greater, yet people who help save the life of another incur significant financial expenses during the assessment phase and following organ donation," observed Beryl Ferguson, National Program Director for the Foundation. In 2006, a pilot program was initiated in BC, jointly launched by the BC Branch of the Kidney Foundation and BC Transplant, to help address this issue and reimburse donors for expenses related to their gift of life such as travel, accommodation and loss of income. In 2008, both Ontario and Manitoba implemented similar provincial programs. "It is our hope that living donor expense programs will become available in every province with a view to ensuring equity and uniformity of benefits across the country," said Ferguson.

For more information on organ donation or on the living organ donor expense reimbursement programs available, visit The Kidney Foundation of Canada's website at www.kidney.ca

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is the national volunteer organization committed to reducing the burden of kidney disease through funding and stimulating innovative research; providing education and support; promoting access to high quality healthcare, and increasing public awareness and commitment to advancing kidney health and organ donation.

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Provincial Scan of Living Donor Reimbursement Programs

- British Columbia was the first province to establish a Living Organ Donor Expense Reimbursement Program (LODERP).
- In July 2006, the B.C. Branch of The Kidney Foundation of Canada and BC Transplant jointly launched a 3-year pilot program to reimburse donors for expenses related to their gift of life, such as travel, accommodation and loss of income. The BC Branch of The Kidney Foundation of Canada administers the program.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.kidney.bc.ca/help/organdonation/index.html#POD>

- In April 2008, Ontario launched the Program for Reimbursement of Expenses of Living Organ Donors (PRELOD). Although the BC and Ontario programs are administered differently, the categories of funding are similar.

For more information on the Ontario program, visit:

<http://www.giftoflife.on.ca/page.cfm?id=23428851-405B-41D2-A9A9-9275EA6C78E7>

- On April 18, 2008 Manitoba's Health Minister announced the creation of a new program to reimburse expenses for living donors. The Manitoba Branch of The Kidney Foundation of Canada will administer the program.
For more information, visit: <http://www.kidney.mb.ca/Newsapril2008.pdf>
- The 2004-2007 Organ and Tissue Donation Action Plan of Quebec's Ministry of Health identified living donor reimbursement as a priority. However, no action has been taken to date.
- In Alberta, in 2003, a government working group recommended compensating living donors for costs directly related to donation. No policy or program has been implemented to date.