



CT Coalition for Organ & Tissue Donation
dba **Donate Life Connecticut**

P.O. Box 4000 • Woodbridge, CT 06525 • Phone: (203) 387-1549 • www.ctorganandtissuedonation.org

Appropriation Committee
Legislative Office Building
Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF
The Connecticut Coalition for Organ and Tissue Donation, dba,
DONATE LIFE CONNECTICUT (DLC)
Presented to
THE CONNECTICUT APPROPRIATION COMMITTEE
on the
AFRICAN AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION

December 9, 2009

Thank you, members of the Appropriations Committee for allowing Donate Life Connecticut (DLC) to submit this written testimony for the record. DLC is an all volunteer, non profit organization that is dedicated to public education and public awareness for all Connecticut residents concerning the life saving benefits of organ, eye and tissue donation. Our statewide collaborative includes healthcare organizations and passionate individuals that recently began an initiative to decrease racial disparities pertaining to donation

Both on a statewide and national level, there are great disparities pertaining to the African American community and donation/transplantation. For example, in Connecticut while African Americans make up approximately 10% of the general population, 30% of the people waiting for an organ transplant in Connecticut are of African American heritage. Similar statistics apply on a national level. There is much speculation as to why there is such a racial disparity. Donate Life Connecticut decided to address this issue and turned to the African American Affairs Commission (AAAC) for assistance. Together we worked to provide donation education to the African American community in attempt to bolster organ and tissue donor registrations...in turn more potential donors.

In less than a year, the AAAC has forged the way for DLC to connect with the African American community in Connecticut through various outlets. DLC has been profiled on the AAAC's thirty minute television program airing statewide on public access channels addressing African American concerns. This opportunity allowed nearly 70,000 Connecticut homes to hear personal transplantation stories of fellow African Americans. Complimenting this media event, the AAAC included DLC's mission, a donor story and a recipient story on the home page of their website. The Commission has connected DLC with over 150 Hartford-based African American churches. Through this contact, DLC was able to mail each pastor a kit to help incorporate the donation message into sermons and discussions in houses of worship. The AAAC has coordinated an opportunity for DLC to address the Hartford Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance (IMA), further encouraging them to discuss donation with their congregations.

The AAAC has provided an invaluable service to our organization's newly funded program to decrease racial disparities. *Without the contacts and endorsements of the AAAC, this project would have been difficult, if not impossible to be successful.* The resources and community bridges that the AAAC provides to the African American community are necessary tools for health care organizations to utilize to reach target audiences. In the event the state decides to dissolve this effective and important Commission, Donate Life Connecticut will be forced to re-evaluate the feasibility of continuing our Minority Outreach Program. This scenario would create a disservice to the hundreds of Connecticut African Americans looking for a second chance at life. We at Donate Life Connecticut implore the state to keep the African American Affairs Commission as an active, effective program working for an under-represented citizen group in Connecticut.

Donate Life Connecticut thanks you for the opportunity to testify to the importance of our forged partnership to save lives in the African American community.

-Submitted by Kari Mull, Program Manager, Donate Life Connecticut