

Media Release



Health
South Eastern Sydney
Local Health District

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St George and Sutherland Hospitals support *DonateLife* Week 2012

Staff at St George and Sutherland Hospitals today announced their support for Australia's *DonateLife* Week, being held across the nation from Sunday 19 February, 2012 to increase Australia's organ and tissue donation rates.

As part of *DonateLife* Week, information stalls will be held outside the hospital cafeteria at St George Hospital on Tuesday 21 February and in the main foyer at Sutherland Hospital on Wednesday 22 February, with organ and tissue donor coordinators on hand to answer questions about organ donation. Information stands will also be held from 11.30am to 1.30 pm at Loftus TAFE on Thursday 23 February and Gympie TAFE on Friday 24 February.

Dr Andrew Cheng, Medical Director for Organ and Tissue Donation at St George and Sutherland Hospitals, said the most important thing that people can do to help save lives through organ and tissue donation this *DonateLife* Week is to *Ask and Know Your Loved One's Donation Wishes*.

"Organ donation is truly a rare opportunity. However, the family of every potential donor is always asked to confirm the donation wishes of their loved ones before organ and/or tissue donation can proceed," Dr Cheng said.

"When more people ask and know the donation wishes of family members, they will then be prepared to confirm the wishes of loved ones if and when the opportunity arises.

"In our hospitals we have specialist doctors, nurses and social workers who will support families before, during and long after the donation process," he said.

Organ and tissue donation can change lives:

- Liver, heart and lung transplants saves lives immediately
- Kidney transplants can take people off regular dialysis and back to a normal life
- Pancreas transplants can cure type 1 diabetes
- Corneas can restore sight

"Transplantation offers hope to a very sick person with chronic disease and the opportunity to a normal life again; to become an active member of their family and our community again," said Dr Cheng.

Terry Clout, Chief Executive Officer of NSW Organ and Tissue Donation Service and Chief Executive, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, said this year's *DonateLife* Week 2012 brings together all participants in the organ and tissue sector to ask Australians to have a memorable discussion with their loved ones to ensure they know and understand their organ and tissue donation wishes.

"Talking about organ and tissue donation with loved ones can be difficult, however, I encourage anyone who hasn't had the discussion with those close to them to do it today," Mr Clout said.

The state-wide launch for *DonateLife* Week will be held on Monday 20 February, 2012 at 8.00am in Martin Place, Sydney. For further information about *DonateLife* Week visit www.donatelife.gov.au

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