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Organ Donor Awareness Week 2021 - Press Release

Written by Administrator

Saturday, 27 March 2021 17:39 - Last Updated Saturday, 27 March 2021 17:57

transplants in 2020 across all the national transplant programmes. Whilst the 190 transplants carried out were 84 less than in 2019, the thoughtfulness of the 62 deceased donors (last year) in these very challenging times is inspiring.

[Link to Organ Donation Transplant Ireland \(ODTI\) end of year 2020 figures](#)

Speaking at the national launch of Organ Donor Awareness Week, Mr. Colin Mackenzie, National Honorary Chairman, Irish Kidney Association said, "Sadly Covid-19 had and continues to have a serious unwelcome impact on the transplant community. Initial medical advice was to cocoon. Suddenly people previously leading a normal life, can no longer attend work or socialise. There was fear and anxiety about the risks amongst patients attending hospitals. This has also been significant impact on people's mental health [i]

A number of people in the dialysis and transplant community died with Covid-19, and we would like to express our deep sympathies to their families."

Ms. Carol Moore, Chief Executive, Irish Kidney Association commented, "A year ago, the 2020 Organ Donor Awareness Week campaign was postponed and ultimately cancelled at short notice when Covid-19 reached our shores. This impacted on the Irish Kidney Association's ability 'on the ground' to promote organ donor awareness and the annual Awareness Week campaign. With Covid-19 still a reality, we have adapted with new ideas for the 2021 awareness campaign."

Ms. Moore explained, "The Irish Kidney Association is delighted to announce that, for the very first time, demonstrating nationwide solidarity in support of organ donation, County and City Councils around the country will light up more than 60 public sites in green throughout the week-long campaign. Green is the internationally recognised colour which celebrates organ

and tissue donation.”

“Patients on transplant waiting lists live in hope that organs will become available to them. Whilst there is hope, it is also a difficult time as their future is uncertain and they know that another family is grieving the loss of a loved one. By lighting up public sites in green we are drawing attention to organ donation being an integral part of active citizenship on the part of the public. From dusk to dawn, over 40 public sites will be lit up in green, undoubtedly prompting much discussion around organ donation.”

This year’s awareness campaign is built around the theme **#Life is a Gift Pass it On** and **Share your Wishes**

. The key message is that the public can play their part in supporting organ donation for transplantation by ensuring that their families know their wishes. i.e., have the conversation *#have the chat*

The words **#Life is a Gift, Pass it On** represent the transient beauty of the ‘gift of life’ underpinned by the selfless generosity of the human spirit.

Share Your Wishes□

represents the importance of discussion with loved ones about organ donation and sharing your wishes is the cornerstone of the campaign.

The campaign’s posters, which are available in three languages, English, Irish and Polish, include photos of 32 grateful transplant recipients (including heart, lung, liver kidney and pancreas) who between them are enjoying over 400 years of extra life selflessly gifted to them by the families of deceased donors. All posters are available digitally and can be downloaded from the IKA’s website www.ika.ie/donorweek2021 . The Irish Pharmacy Union has circulated the campaign posters to over 1,850 pharmacies nationwide for display.

As well as live presentations at the national online launch of the campaign on 23rd March which included a video presentation by the Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly, T.D. there were also video presentations of people awaiting a transplant, a donor family and a number of transplant

recipients. The videos were recorded at different locations around the country in advance and will be available on the Irish Kidney Association's website and social media.

During Organ Donor Awareness Week, the Irish Kidney Association will be actively posting messages about organ donation through their various social media channels encouraging the public to share these with their friends to get the country having the organ donation conversation.

There will be an inspiring series of videos also released during the week. Well-known personalities and Irish diaspora based around the world, (including New Zealand, Malaysia, Australia, Canada, America, Europe and South Africa), who have been touched by organ donation, have lent their support in a series of videos' chains sharing the ***Life is a Gift Pass it On*** message while passing on the organ donor card. The Diaspora videos' chain can be seen in the following link

<https://youtu.be/pUnuS4MNnmM>

The talented and widely acclaimed actress and singer Angeline Ball is lending her support to this initiative as it is a cause close to her heart. Her niece Saoirse Perry underwent a liver transplant and Saoirse, is leading a chain of videos of Irish speakers sharing the ***Life is a Gift*** message 'as gaeilge'. Former ambassadors for organ donor awareness, who will also feature on video promoting

Life is a Gift, Pass it On

, including Mary Kennedy, Ray D'Arcy, and donor family, Derry and Sallyanne Clarke, living kidney donors Vivienne Traynor and Jarlath Regan, are also featured in a video chain passing on the organ donor card and the key message. Jarlath will also be dedicating one of his 'An Irishman Abroad' podcasts to organ donation during Awareness Week.

Social media hashtags for Organ Donor Awareness Week are: #LifeIsAGift and #DonorWeek21. People can also tag the Irish Kidney Association when doing their own posts (@IrishKidneyAs on Twitter, @IrishKidneyA on Instagram & @IrishKidneyAssociation on Facebook).

The Irish Kidney Association is encouraging the wider public to show their support for the campaign by organising their own socially distanced awareness activities and challenges.

The campaign poster will also appear on the **RTÉ Faircity** set for some of the scenes output during Awareness Week. For three weeks' leading up to and including Organ Donor Awareness Week, Adshel poster sites, located in

30 shopping centres

around the country, will display the campaign poster. A full list of sites is available on the IKA website

www.ika.ie/donorweek2021

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This page also contains a range of materials for social media and education packs.

The Irish Kidney Association welcomes the recent announcement that a national database for organ donation in intensive care units (ICUs) is due to be implemented this year, according to the National Office of Clinical Audit (NOCA). Improved information around potential organ donors will help inform future public awareness activities as well as developments in hospitals.

Individuals who wish to support organ donation are encouraged to keep the reminders of their decision available by carrying the organ donor card, permitting Code 115 to be included on their driver's licence and having the 'digital organ donor card' APP on their smartphone. Organ Donor Cards can be obtained by phoning the Irish Kidney Association on 01 6205306

or Free text the word DONOR to 50050. You can also

* visit the website*

www.ika.ie/get-a-donor-card

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