College Student Organ Donation Study: Intervention to Increase Awareness and Registration

PI: Bradi B Granger, RN, PhD

Project Description
CO-ORGAN is an intervention developed by nurses to increase registered donors in NC. Participants will watch a video of caring for transplant candidates, participate in discussions and sign donor cards. Objectives include increased awareness of gaps in organ availability, steps to organ donation, dispersion of myths and increased registered donors.

Project Summary:

a. With this campaign we hope to address the need for increased organ donation and increased numbers of registered organ donors in the local community. By targeting college age students with a creative educational program featuring the life-experience of families and patients waiting for transplant, we hope to increase awareness of the gaps in organ availability and the myths and misconceptions surrounding organ donation and organ receipt. The unique contribution of this project is its focus on this challenging age group and the social stigmas associated with death. Evidence suggests that registration among college age students could improve the donor pool by as much as 30%. The expansive NC transplant waiting list underscores the need to support this project (2,876 people waiting for organs in NC).

b. The project is particularly important to the hundreds of North Carolinians that die each year awaiting transplant. Our state ranks among the highest in the country in diabetes and hypertension, both serious chronic illnesses leading to end-organ damage and the need for transplantation. Increasing awareness of links between healthy behavior and organ damage among young people in NC may help stymie the growing demand for organs in the future.

c. Nurses will conduct the following key activities during the grant period: 1) Professional development of a video showing the lived experience of waiting for transplant, including the patient and the care-giving milieu, family, physicians, nurses and other key providers, 2) Facilitation of educational forums in which attendees will listen to the live video, participate in a seminar discussion and have the opportunity to sign a donor card, and 3) Create a database and analysis plan to assess the effect of the intervention by showing measurable differences in key endpoints, including significance of changes in organ donation registrants in NC. All analyses will be submitted to the NC Dept of Administration and the NC License to Give Trust Fund Commission at the conclusion of one year of funding.

d. The community to be served includes the geographic areas of Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill, specifically focusing on the college student populations as follows: NC Central University (6,680 students), Duke University (6,330 undergraduates and 5,350 graduates), UNC (10,799 undergraduates and 2,182
graduates), NC State University (23,730 undergraduates and 7,096 graduates),
and Meredith College (1,990 and 149 graduates).
Collaborative organizations in the community include the Duke University School of
Nursing and Duke University Health System, in conjunction with NC Donor Services,
Duke Affiliated Physicians, NC Universities and Colleges, National Orders of Fraternity
and Sorority Memberships and United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS).