



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**New life for California kidney transplant patients**  
*Statewide media campaign seeks to add new organ donors as  
Kaiser kidney patient transition wraps up*

(San Francisco) – The California Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) has teamed up with Donate Life California and northern California kidney transplant centers to increase organ donations and registry signups. A statewide media campaign sponsored by Donate Life California will help give new life to the northern California Kaiser patients transitioned to other transplant facilities, such as UCSF and UC Davis Medical Centers, as well as the nearly 20,000 other Californians still waiting for donated organs.

After Kaiser’s announcement last year that its transplant center would close, the DMHC took the lead in coordinating the complex transition of the Kaiser kidney patients to alternate transplant centers, and their placement on the national United Network of Organ Sharing (UNOS) list, a necessity for receiving a donated organ. On April 4, the last Kaiser patient was transferred and added to the UNOS national list.

“I am pleased to say that the DMHC and the extraordinary medical teams at UCSF and UC Davis have fulfilled our commitment to transition the Kaiser patients, and each and every one now should know his or her status either on organ donation waiting lists or at alternate treatment facilities,” said Cindy Ehnes, Director of the DMHC. “The next step is to do all we can to increase organ donation so that these patients get a chance at a long and healthy life.”

Donate Life California is an organ and tissue donor registry created in 2005 to develop a statewide list of potential donors. It launched its statewide media campaign during April, which is designated as Donate Life Month. The campaign is targeted to African American, Asian and Latino communities in eleven major markets, to highlight the need for Californians of color to

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sign up for the organ registry, as nearly two-thirds of the 20,000 waiting for organ donations in the state belong to these communities.

The \$3 million campaign was made possible through a gift from the Kaiser Foundation, following the closure of Kaiser's northern California kidney transplant center that necessitated the transition of all of the center's patients to alternate facilities. The transition process, coordinated by the DMHC, involved extremely complex and time-consuming issues such as standardizing patient files between three independent health care systems and arranging new, updated evaluations. The DMHC's goal in its monitoring role was to minimize patients' concerns and anxiety about their status and ensure that all patients were safely transitioned and correctly credited with their accrued wait time at the new facilities.

"Throughout this period, our priority has been to make sure that as many patients as possible have been successfully transferred to the appropriate lists, received the highest quality of care possible, and have the peace of mind that their needs are being met," said Ehnes.

The California Department of Managed Health Care is the only stand-alone watchdog agency in the nation, touching the lives of more than 21 million enrollees. The DMHC has assisted more than 633,000 Californians through its 24-hour Help Center to resolve their HMO problems, educate consumers on health care rights and responsibilities, and work closely with HMO plans to ensure a solvent and stable managed health care system.

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