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## MEDIA RELEASE

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**KENT  
COUNTY  
RECEIVES  
AWARD**

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10/26/17  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Gift of Life Michigan honors Kent County for life-changing work**

*Medical Examiner office champions organ and tissue donation, helping hundreds*

ANN ARBOR, MI— Gift of Life Michigan presented Kent County with an award Thursday recognizing its efforts to help others through organ, eye and tissue donation.

The Gift of Life Michigan Donation Champion Award was presented to the county's Medical Examiner office for its extraordinary dedication to make sure individuals and families wishing to donate are able to do so. Dr. Stephen Cohle is Kent County's Chief Medical Examiner, and Dr. David Start is the Deputy Chief Medical Examiner.

This is the first Donation Champion Award given by Gift of Life to a Medical Examiner's office.

"Kent County ME has referred more tissue donors than any other medical examiner office in the state this year," said Stephanie Sommer, Gift of Life's Medical Examiner Liaison. "The dedication of Dr. Cohle, Dr. Start and their team has allowed 31 people to become donors this year, helping as many as 2,300 people live better lives."

About 70 percent of potential donors fall under medical examiner jurisdiction. Cooperation and communication on every ME case that involves a potential donor makes it possible for organs and tissues to be recovered. It also ensures evidence is preserved so medical examiners can determine the cause and manner of death.

Gift of Life Michigan, the state's federally designated organ and tissue recovery agency, can't effectively fulfill its mission without working with medical examiners in Michigan's 83 counties.

The partnerships make it possible to honor the donation decisions of the 60 percent of adults in Michigan who are registered donors. Medical examiners also make it possible for families to consider donation for loved ones who aren't registered.

"Kent County is helping save lives, ease pain and restore sight and mobility for hundreds," said Dorrie Dils, Gift of Life's CEO. "This award is our way of thanking them on behalf of all those recipients."

Nationally, 1.5 million patients receive tissue transplants every year.

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#### EDITOR'S NOTES:

- Anyone can join the Michigan Organ Donor Registry, regardless of age or health history. To join or to learn more, go to [GiftOfLifeMichigan.org](http://GiftOfLifeMichigan.org) or call 866.500.5801.

