

HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



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Medical Examiner's Office Receives Grant to Enhance Organ Donations

Office also to be honored with "Donation Champion Award"

GRAND RAPIDS – The Kent County Office of the Medical Examiner has been awarded a \$20,000 iPad Program Grant by the Gift of Life Foundation. The funds will be used to provide iPads, software and support plans to the seven Medical Examiner Investigators in Kent County. The grant will allow investigators to more efficiently refer organ and tissue donations to Gift of Life. The iPads make it easier to report remotely by allowing voice dictation software to complete forms and wireless service to complete reports from the field.

Most referrals to Gift of Life are made by hospitals when a patient dies or is near death. When a death occurs outside of a hospital, Gift of Life depends on medical examiners to notify them. Kent County's Medical Examiner made the first non-hospital death referral to Gift of Life in 1998, and since that time has referred more tissue donors than any other county in Michigan. "Getting the information to Gift of Life in a timely manner is crucial to the success rates of organ and tissue donation," said Dr. Stephen Cohle, Chief Medical Examiner. "Using this technology is going to allow us to build upon the work that we have been doing in Kent County."

Gift of Life is Michigan's only federally designated organ and tissue recovery program and provides services necessary for organ and tissue donation to occur though out the State. More than 900 organs are recovered every year for transplantation from at least 300 donors, saving hundreds of lives. Bone, skin and other tissue also are recovered, helping to significantly improve the lives of thousands of seriously injured and ill recipients. "We anticipate this grant will enhance an already robust program in Kent County," according to Anne Kowalczyk, the Executive Director of the Gift of Life Foundation. "The iPads make it easier for investigators to refer and improve timely notification on-site."

Gift of Life is also honoring the Office of the Medical Examiner, Dr. Stephen Cohle and Deputy Chief Medical Examiner Dr. David Start with the "Gift of Life Michigan Donation Champion" Award for extraordinary dedication to ensuring individuals and families wishing to donate are able. "Kent County is fortunate to have Dr. Cohle, Dr. Start and their devoted, hard-working team," said Wayman Britt, Interim Kent County Administrator/Controller. "The entire office shows true compassion and professionalism during a time that can be difficult for families to process."

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 265 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.