

**Contact:**  
Ross Goldberg  
818-597-8453, x-1  
ross@kevinross.net

## **OneLegacy CEO Cites “Fundamental, Positive Change” in Worldwide Attitudes Toward Organ and Tissue Donation**

(LOS ANGELES – September 20, 2017) — One of the nation’s leading advocates for organ donation and transplantation is reporting “fundamental, positive change” in the mindset of people in many parts of the world and an optimistic trend toward the decision to donate life through the increased adoption of and trust in the donation process.

“I see a better understanding in many nations, which is leading to a record number of organ and tissue donations in many countries,” says Tom Mone, chief executive officer of OneLegacy, the largest organ, eye and tissue recovery organization in the world. “People who did not necessarily grow up in a culture that supported donation are now beginning to embrace donation as something that is normal, natural and can save lives.”

In particular Mone cites the dramatic changes taking place in China, which is predicted to have the most organ transplantations in the world by 2020. Last month Mone was in Kunming, China, addressing the annual meeting of the China Transplant Physician Society.

“The positive message of both living donation and deceased donation is spreading across the Chinese community,” said Mone. “There’s been recognition on the part of the government nationwide, as well as in the different provinces, of the importance in investing in having designated donation professionals educating both the public and physicians. What was just a fledgling initiative a couple of years ago is now an effective working program showing some real lifesaving benefit.”

Mone says that the infrastructure around the Chinese deceased donation program has grown tremendously over the past two years, and there has been a “fundamental recognition of the need to formalize donation programs and have dedicated resources to work with families and hospitals to make donation happen. There is also now a website in China, as there is in the United States, to help people better understand the process and the benefits of donation.”

*(More)*

## OneLegacy/China Donation Trends

Page 2

Looking beyond China, Mone is encouraged to see “many very strong and well-established programs and cultures of donation across Europe and other parts of the world.

“Spain and the U.S. lead the world in donation with both countries having made substantial investments in staff, professional training, hospitals, public education and integrating organ donation into end-of-life care,” said Mone. “This speaks to the importance of professionalization and the need for focused attention on the value of organ donation to both recipients and donors and families who choose to leave a legacy of life.”

Earlier this month Mone spoke at the International Organ Donation and Procurement meeting in Geneva regarding the underlying legal systems that support the exceptional donation rates of the U.S. and Spain – the U.S. law being Opt-In/Voluntary Authorization and Spain’s being Opt-Out/Presumed Consent. Many European and some Latin American countries have adopted an Opt-Out approach to organ donation that, in such countries like Spain, Croatia, Belgium, Portugal and France, has shown an overall increase in the total number of donations when compared to those countries with an Opt-In policy.

However, Mone points out that when the donation rates are normalized for the widely varying death rates (donation potential) of each country or U.S. state, his research shows that nine U.S. (Opt-In) states and Spain (Opt-Out) make up the top-ten donation regions around the world. Leading these regions are Texas, Pennsylvania and Spain at 40+ death rate normalized Donors per Million (nDPM). California ranked sixth in the world at 35 nDPM.

“The data demonstrate that while the public and waiting recipients often tout the ‘success’ of Opt-Out donation as a reason to change underlying authorization laws, the U.S. has managed to lead the world by relying on a voluntary Opt-In system,” says Mone. “This results from the Opt-Out countries in practice not relying on their presumption of consent and always relying on the family decision at the time of death, creating a “soft” Opt-Out system. In the U.S. an individual’s registered choice to donate is legally binding and relied upon, making ours a “hard” Opt-In system. In addition, the United States’ investment in organ donation professionalization exceeds every country’s and has resulted in as great an integration of donation into hospital and community cultures as in Spain.

“The simple truth is that organ, eye and tissue donation saves and heals lives,” Mone continues. “That is a goal that knows no national, ethnic or religious boundaries. My trip to

*(More)*

## **OneLegacy/China Donation Trends**

*Page 3*

China was all about spreading this message and learning from each other on how we can all do a better job in positively impacting donation activity in our own communities.”

Under Mone’s leadership since 2000, OneLegacy has seen a 74 percent increase in lives saved by organ transplantation and a 300 percent increase in lives healed through tissue transplant. Last year OneLegacy established a new national record of organs recovered and transplanted as well as setting a national record of tissue and cornea donors.

### **About OneLegacy**

OneLegacy is a nonprofit organization dedicated to saving lives through organ, eye and tissue donation in seven counties in Southern California: Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura, Santa Barbara and Kern. Serving more than 200 hospitals, 11 transplant centers, and a diverse population of nearly 20 million, OneLegacy is the largest organ, eye and tissue recovery organization in the world. For more information, call OneLegacy at 800-786-4077, or visit [onelegacy.org](http://onelegacy.org).

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