

Eye Bank Sets Record For Transplants

Providing the "gift of sight" at a rate of six times per day. This the latest record set by the Heartland Lions Eye Banks (HLEB). In a three month comparison, the Eye Bank has provided 30 percent more corneal tissue for transplants this fiscal year over last. In addition, the Eye Bank set a new record for the total number of corneas provided for transplant in one month, 184.

The increase in corneal tissue can be attributed in part to the completion of the HLEB retrieval territory expansion, but also to a new law that went into affect August 21, 1998, requiring hospitals to report all deaths to a designated organ procurement organization.

A previous law required hospitals to approach families about donation, but there were no means of enforcing it. The new law requires hospitals to report all deaths to an organ procurement organization (OPO). In addition, only individuals specifically trained by the OPO can approach families about organ and tissue donation. The new law will be enforced by the Federal Government with strict penalties against any medical facilities that do not comply.

"Since the hospitals are required to now report all deaths, this reminds them to approach families about donation," explained Mark Livesay, Associate Director at HLEB.

With the increase in corneal tissue, the largest number of transplants ever done in the history of the eye bank, the Lions may have noticed an increase in the calls requesting their assistance to transport donor eye tissue to the eye bank.

"Without the Lions involvement, we could not begin to provide the number of corneas for transplant that we have in these three months," Livesay said. "This new record was not only a staff effort,

but a volunteer effort of the Lions and the Highway Patrol as well."

The Eye Bank would like to recognize those Lions who have volunteered their time and transportation to help deliver the "gift of sight" to someone in need.

The following list recognizes Lions who have transported tissue during this fiscal year (July through October):

Maynard Anderson, Anthony Bahr, Harley Ballard, Bernie Bien, Derrick Burchette, David Campbell, James Carpenter, Jim Castleberry, Paul Chermes, Bruce Chinn, Emmett Coleman, Jerry Colvin, Ramona Conant, Bob Crump, George Davis, Charles Deab, Wally Dressel, Bob Eisenhower, Clifford Falzone, Donald & Linda Ferrier, Jerry Fick, Charles Findley, Charles Finley, Paul Gardener, Glenn Geiger, Leonard Gibby, Cynthia Goodman, Emery Hale, Don Hartman, Tom Hartman, Don Hasch, Don Hawkins, Dennis Hemsath, Jerry Hendrickson, Don Hobbs, Rick Hopp, Leon Hove, John Hubbard, Nate Huff, Jerry James, DeWayne Johnson, Tom & Judy Johnston, James Keaster, Jerry & Cheryl Luper, Jack Martin, Jim Matthew, Troy Maupin, Bob May, Ken McGuire, David Menefee, Ray Morris, Bob Morrison, Faye Morrison, John Morten, B.J. Nichols, Howard Nickelson, Brooks Nicklas, Hugh Nutt, Gail Oehrke, Steve Oldfield, Ron Oney, Sam Orr, John Palmer, Frank Paul, Russell Petree, Leroy Potter, Tom Ray, Dewell Reeves, Kenny Rehm, Norma Reiger, Ben Ritter, David Roberts, Rudy Romdall, Ernie & Maggie Schlichting, Von Smith, Jim Stevenson, Carl Strader, Herb Stratton, Pat Sullivan, W. Lee Swearingen, Larry Swift, Robert Teacutter, Charlie Teeter, Sherry Thompson, Dorsey Van Mater, David Vanderman, Raymond Weatherford, John Wieman, Cleo Wiggans, Tracy Wiley, Steve Williams, McCormick Wilson, Charles Winfield, Roland Winters.

HLEB Statistics

| July - November | '97-'98 | '98-'99 |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|
| TOTAL EYES RETRIEVED | 1,254 | 1,486 |
| TOTAL CORNEA TRANSPLANTS | 573 | 764 |

A Word From...

Lion Ron Walkenbach, Ph.D., Executive Director



The Heartland Lions Eye Banks (HLEB) had a successful 1998. With the completion of the opening and inspections of our six eye bank offices, the HLEB has seen an increase eye donations, which, of course, translates into a greater number of corneas available for transplant and eye tissues for research.

The Lions of Missouri should feel great pride in knowing that their eye bank continues to perform above projected levels and has maintained its standing as one of the largest eye banks in the nation, servicing those in need by providing the gift of sight.

With the expansion of the HLEB offices into three states, the Missouri Lions have offered the opportunity for more people to enjoy the gift of sight than ever before. This growth has allowed the Lions to service more people in their own communities as well as individuals in areas that were not being serviced at all.

Of great concern in 1999, is the proposed change in processing fee schedule by the Health Care Funding Agency of Health and Human Services (HCFA). The impact of slashing processing

fees for eye banks that are not fully endowed will, most likely, reduce the number of corneas available for transplant in general, and make research tissue nearly extinct. Focus will, out of necessity, shift from raising donor awareness to fund raising, in order to continue the eye banks' services.

The Lions of Missouri have shown great faith in the Foundation and its eye banking program. Your letter writing campaign has been tremendous! Through your vigilant efforts, we will hopefully defeat the HCFA proposal.

1999 MLERF Board Meeting Dates

**March 13, June 12*,
September 11 & December 11**

Time: 10:00 AM

Location: The Health Pavilion, 404 Keene St., Columbia

EVERYONE IS WELCOME, PLEASE PLAN TO ATTEND

*Annual Governors-Elect Forum

