

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELAEASE**

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Contact: Michele Hutchins  
(603) 238- 6468



**SMH Raising the Flag to Help Raise Awareness for Organ Donation**

PLYMOUTH, N.H. --- Speare Memorial Hospital is joining other hospitals across New Hampshire to get an early start on celebrating the national *Donate Life Month* in April.

In January hospitals across New Hampshire began raising awareness by flying the Donate Life Flag that is making its way across the state. Speare Memorial Hospital's President/CEO Michelle McEwen, FACHE, will sign the Donate Life flag on February 18 at 9 a.m. during SMH's flag raising ceremony. The hospital will fly the flag for two days before it travels on, making its way to the state capitol for the final raising in April.

Flags Across New Hampshire is the Granite State's own unique take on the national Flags Across America Campaign. In addition to honoring the hundreds of thousands of donors and recipients, like Marguerite Hoyesen a volunteer at SMH, the project invites the community to register as organ and tissue donors at [www.DonateLifeNewEngland.org](http://www.DonateLifeNewEngland.org)

Hoyesen was diagnosed in October of 1999 with Alpha 1 disease, a hereditary condition that can result in serious lung and/or liver disease. In October of 2002, Hoyesen received a transplant of her right lung. With the transplant surgery going well, Hoyesen had a speedy recovery and only spent 18 days in the hospital. "It is such an overwhelming feeling. You feel thankful that someone was willing to donate," states Hoyesen. Since the transplant Hoyesen has been able to do things like snow shoe and hike again and says the best part is, "I am more independent now and don't have to rely on people."

There are currently over 105,000 Americans awaiting a life saving organ transplant. On average, 18 patients die every day in the United States waiting for a donated organ. New England Organ Bank Hospital Relations Specialist Berta Grunbeck says, "Raising awareness of donation in the communities of New Hampshire can save and enhance lives. A single donor can save up to seven lives and a tissue donor can enhance the lives of over 75 patients. Getting the word out about donation can have incredibly positive results."

Speare Memorial Hospital is a 24-hour, acute care, non-profit community hospital and health care provider serving Plymouth and the communities of central New Hampshire for more than a century. Visit online at [www.spearehospital.com](http://www.spearehospital.com) and join us on Facebook.

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