



For Immediate Release

Contact: John McInerney, Director of Marketing and E-Learning
Phone: 973.972.5961
Email: mcinerjp@umdnj.edu

UMDNJ Develops Innovative Online Education Addressing Organ and Tissue Donation and Recovery in Response to New Jersey Hero Act Legislation

(NEWARK, NJ, USA – October 19, 2011) In response to the “New Jersey Hero Act,” legislation, the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) will address the need for professional health education in organ and tissue donation and recovery with a series of online continuing education activities.

The “New Jersey Hero Act,” enacted by the New Jersey Legislature and General Assembly, outlines the State’s renewed public policy of advocacy that encourages positive donation decisions and promotes learning initiatives for practicing physicians, nurses and health care professionals as certified continuing education. As a means of dispelling myths associated with organ donation, the UMDNJ educational initiative will provide accurate information about the donation and recovery process, and emphasize the fundamental responsibility of able individuals to take appropriate action to help save or enhance another’s life through donation.

Today, close to 5,000 New Jersey residents wait for organ donations to save their lives, and countless others for life enhancing tissue donations. Each of these individuals depends on ordinary citizens who make the heroic decision to help through donation. Unfortunately, such heroes are small in number, as misinformation and preconceived notions about organ and tissue donation often deter potential donors from making a life-saving decision to give. Although 95% of the national population indicates support for donation, a far smaller percentage actually makes the legally binding decision to become organ and tissue donors. The lack of available organs for transplant has resulted in the deaths of over 2,470 New Jersey residents since 1997.

To address this health care crisis, UMDNJ has partnered with New Jersey organ procurement organizations, the New Jersey Organ and Tissue Sharing Network and the Gift of Life Donor Program; as well as the Discovery Institute for Medical Education (DIME) to develop the program New Jersey *HeroesAct* (<http://www.heroesact.org>). This series of innovative educational activities will guide physicians, nurses and other health care professionals through the complex, and sometimes emotional topics related to organ and tissue donation. “Education promotes understanding and confidence” said Barbara Turci, Assistant Director of Organ Recovery Services at NJ Sharing Network. “New Jersey needs health care providers who are informed, and can communicate knowledge to their patients with confidence.”

This series of web-based CME/CE-certified activities consists of 4 online video modules that address the specific topics of Legal and Ethical Standards, Clinical Practice Guidelines, Donor and Organ Management and Communication Strategies. *HeroesAct* is supported by an educational grant from Pfizer, Inc. There are no fees for participating and receiving CME/CE credit for these activities.

“Accurate and responsible information can make a significant impact on medical practice, and certified education ensures that content is relevant, current and unbiased,” said Patrick Dwyer, Director of Continuing Medical Education at the UMDNJ-Center for Continuing and Outreach Education. “Health care professionals in New Jersey have a unique opportunity to influence positive decisions by providing patients with knowledgeable insight into the processes and issues associated with donation.”

Mr. Dwyer added, “This educational activity will provide a foundation for that knowledge, as well as a resource for additional learning on this topic. By providing high-quality education, we hope to shed some

light on this topic, and influence organ and tissue donation in a positive way.”

To learn more about UMDNJ’s New Jersey *HeroesAct* CME/CE Enduring online activity, please visit: <http://www.heroesact.org>.

| ###

About the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey – Center for Continuing and Outreach Education (UMDNJ-CCOE)

As the largest public health sciences university in the country, UMDNJ provides a resource-rich foundation for continuing medical education excellence through the Center for Continuing and Outreach Education (CCOE). Working in partnership with eight schools and numerous institutes and centers across five regional campuses throughout New Jersey, CCOE provides a comprehensive program of continuing medical education with the goal of improving the quality of patient care by providing lifelong educational opportunities for physicians and other healthcare providers.

In 2010, UMDNJ-CCOE was re-accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) and received “Accreditation with Commendation” status, the highest rating achievable by a provider of CME. Please visit <http://ccoe.umdj.edu> for more information.

About New Jersey Organ and Tissue Sharing Network

NJ Sharing Network is a non-profit, federally designated organization responsible for the recovery and placement of donated organs and tissue for New Jersey residents in need of lifesaving transplants. For information, please call 1-800-SHARE-NJ (1-800-742-7365) or visit <http://www.sharenj.org> to register as an organ or tissue donor.

About the Gift of Life Program

Gift of Life Donor Program, the nonprofit organization serving the eastern half of Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and Delaware, is responsible for recovering and distributing organs and tissues used in life-saving and life-enhancing transplants. For information, please call 800-DONORS-1 (800-366-6771) or visit <http://www.giftoflife.org> to register as an organ or tissue donor.

About Discover Institute for Medical Education (DIME)

The Discovery Institute of Medical Education’s mission is to create a comprehensive range of continuing education activities that support healthcare providers in improving their clinical competence and performance in providing quality healthcare services to ultimately improve health outcomes for their patients.