

Donating Organs Save Lives

By TOM FULLER
Turfwerks

As I finished reading the March issue of *Hole Notes*, the articles on natural disasters caught my attention, mainly the annual number of deaths. The thought was how could the numbers be reduced? Tornadoes (57 annually), hurricanes and earthquakes are out of our control, and at the mercy of Mother Nature. That leaves lightning, and how many times have we had to clear the course due to weather or how often you witness or even experienced those that are fishing in boats or on shore, or the ball players, they stick it out until the last possible second before seeking shelter. I would suspect that of the 58 deaths and 300 annual injuries they were intelligent adults. We can reduce those figures just by using common sense. Another cause of death that we can help reduce the number of annual fatalities is organ donation.

I am sure we have all noticed the increase of publicity on organ and tissue donation lately. To compare the annual statistics of Mother Nature, nationally there are about 100,000 people waiting on the organ and tissue lists. Every day there are about 100 more people added to the list and every day 18 will die waiting.

As of April 9, there were 2,696 people in Minnesota that are waiting on a list. Most common are: kidneys, 1,734; liver, 520; heart, 113, and 87 are waiting for a lung. The remaining are waiting for other organs or a combination of organs, and this does

not include those that need tissue or parts of the eye, etc.

One untimely passing can potentially save six lives, and help many others. Another statistic that I heard last year is that 51% of the Drivers Licenses issued in Minnesota have donor on there license, and there is still a shortage.

So, why my interest in donation? In September of 2008 I was diagnosed with a lung disease, '*Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis*.' The only cure for this particular disease is a transplant.

One of the first comments I hear is "It has to be from all those chemicals and fertilizers you have been around all those years working on the golf courses!" I did present this question to the Doctor I am seeing, (who is one of leading researchers for this lung disease). His reply was "It is probably very unlikely that it could start this disease."

Before I had a chance to finish this article, I have been informed that after my most recent tests, I will be on the lung transplant list by the end of April.

If this article has created any interest in organ donation, you can go to the web site www.life-source.org. They coordinate the process between the donor and the recipient in this region. They answer a lot of questions and you can also sign up there.

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