

---

# health alert

---

## Improving Organ Transplants

(NAPSA)—Doctors have developed techniques that have made organ and tissue transplant surgeries more successful.

These new techniques, combined with advances in drug therapies, have improved the quality and length of life for organ recipients and reduced the chances of an organ being rejected by a recipient's body.

Advances in transplantation aside, however, surgeons say one of the most important factors in a successful organ and tissue transplant is still the organ match.

Generally, better organ matches are made when the donor and recipient are of the same race. This fact, say healthcare professionals, represents a growing problem for the African American community, which faces a critical shortage of organ donors.

African Americans are more likely to suffer from diabetes, hypertension and kidney disorders than are members of other races. They are therefore more likely to need organ transplants.

In fact, African Americans make up 25 percent of the people on the national organ recipient waiting list, despite accounting for only 13 percent of the national population.

To help solve the organ and tissue shortage, a community service project called *Linkages to Life: Organ, Tissue and Bone Marrow Donation Awareness Program* was created. The initiative uses out-



**New technologies have helped thousands of organ recipients lead longer, healthier lives.**

reach programs, networks and community service to increase awareness among African Americans about the importance of organ donation.

In addition, the program, run by a non-profit African American women's group called The Links Inc., and supported in part with contributions from Roche, aims to dispel many of the misconceptions surrounding organ donation.

The program emphasizes these facts:

- Major religions endorse organ and tissue donation.
- The decision as to who receives an organ is made in a fair and non-prejudicial manner.
- Better matches are made when donor and recipient are of the same race.

For more information visit [www.unos.org](http://www.unos.org).