

HEART Act expands access to organ transplants in New York

For thousands of New Yorkers, time is the most precious resource when waiting for an organ transplant.

It's also the most uncertain.

For far too long, our state's laws made that wait even harder, especially for families already facing economic disadvantages. That is why I was proud to partner with Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes to sponsor and pass the HEART (Helping Equal Access to Registrations for Transplants) Act, legislation that removes barriers and expands access to lifesaving care.

Around 8,000 New York residents are currently waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant. Until recently, state law – dating back more than 30 years – restricted patients to being listed at just one transplant center at a time. New York was the only state in the

country with such a limitation. But while some patients with private health insurance were able to work around this by seeking care out of state, many others, particularly those relying on Medicaid, were left with fewer options and longer waits.

The HEART Act changed that.

Signed into law in October, the HEART Act allows New Yorkers to register at multiple transplant centers across the state at the same time. According to Donate Life New York State, this change could cut transplant waiting times by nearly half and reduce mortality rates by around 20%.

The HEART Act offers real hope for fam-

ilies in Cheektowaga and across Western New York who are waiting, praying and fighting for a second chance at life.

This legislation passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. I am proud to have worked with colleagues on both sides of the aisle, members of the medical community and advocates who understand that your ZIP code or insurance status should never determine whether you live or die.

The HEART Act is about removing obstacles that never should have existed. By repealing an outdated restriction and expanding access to

care, patients and families have more choices when time matters most.



**April
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