

Hospital honored

Special to the Okeechobee News

Raulerson Hospital is among a select group of hospitals nationwide recognized for promoting enrollment in state organ donor registries in a national campaign sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). The campaign has added 400,000 donor enrollments to state registries nationwide since 2011.

Raulerson Hospital conducted awareness and registry campaigns to educate staff, patients, visitors, and community members about the critical need for organ, eye, and tissue donors and, by doing so, increased the number of potential donors on Florida's donor registry. The hospital earned points for each activity implemented between May 2015 and April 2016 and was awarded Bronze recognition through the HRSA Workplace Partnership for Life Hospital Campaign.

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Left to right are: Terry Brown-chief financial officer, Cheryl Cardy-director of nurses, Kathy Selby-director emergency services, Deb Benitez-director ICU, Stephanie Quesinberry-director surgical services, Kennis McCoy-nursing supervisor, Mallika Sanker-VP QM/RM, Lance Richards-patient safety officer, Audrey Harling-Translife Hospital Relations coordinator, and Brian Melear, chief executive officer.

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Of the 995 hospitals and transplant centers participating in the campaign, 207 were awarded Bronze recognition during this phase of the campaign.

This campaign is a special effort of HRSA's Workplace Partnership for Life to mobilize the nation's hospitals to increase the number of people in the country who are registered organ, eye, and tissue donors and ultimately, the number of organs available for transplant.

The campaign unites donation advocates at hospitals with representatives from their local organ procurement organizations, Donate Life America affiliates, and state and regional hospital associations. Working together, the teams leverage their communications resources and outreach efforts to most effectively spread word of the critical need for donors.

Raulerson Hospital worked with TransLife on the campaign. TransLife is East-Central Florida's federally-designated organ and tissue donation program agency, covering 10 counties and partnering with more than 40 hospitals. At the time of donation, TransLife serves as a critical link between the hospital,

the donor family and those awaiting the Gift of Life.

"This national recognition is extraordinary because it is indicative of the strong partners we have in our community who are committed to sharing the message of hope through organ, eye and tissue donation education," said David DeStefano, TransLife's executive director. "We are proud of the work Raulerson Hospital has done to educate our community and look forward to continuing this shared message of hope in the future."

If you would like more information on registering as an organ donor, please visit www.organdonor.gov.