



Maricopa County Sheriff's Office
Joe Arpaio, Sheriff

NEWSRelease

For Release: April 29, 2015

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ARPAIO'S "I DO" PROGRAM (INMATES WILLING TO DONATE THEIR ORGANS) HAS THEM JOINING NATIONAL DRIVE

(Maricopa County, AZ) Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio says nearly 100 inmates this month have volunteered to donate their organs as part of a national drive to save lives through organ transplantation.

It's called the "I DO Program" (Inmates willing to Donate their Organs), and on the last day of the nation's April drive, inmates will line up at Tent City at 1:30PM to sign up with a national organ donor program.

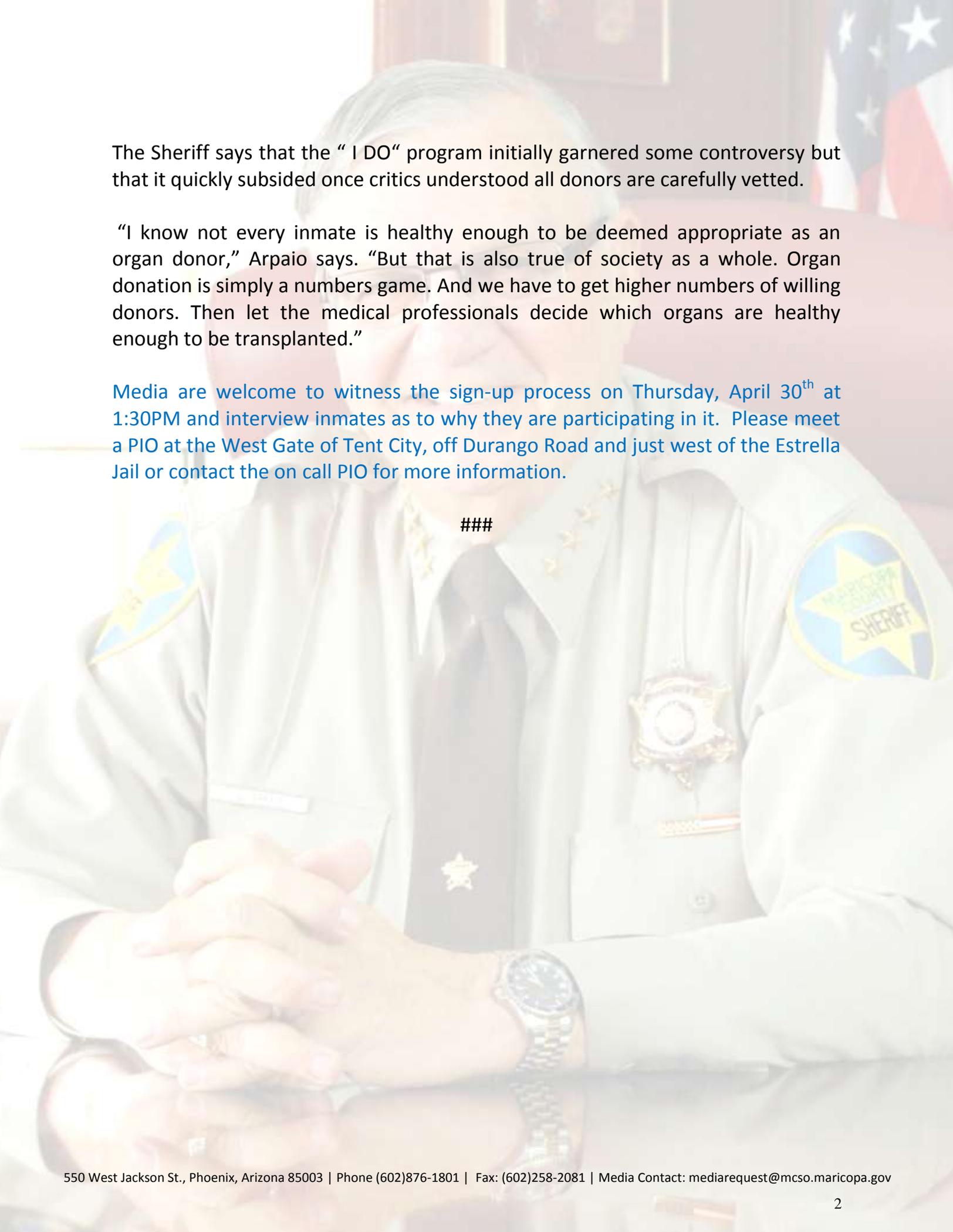
"People of all ages and backgrounds are needed to help those waiting for a life-saving organ," Sheriff Arpaio says. "The inmates who have agreed to be part of this important effort should truly be commended for this unselfish act of kindness and generosity."

According to a national organ donation site, 123,000 Americans are in need of organ transplants and 21 people die each day waiting for a suitable donation.

The decision to become a donor can save up to eight (8) different lives and enhance many more with such things as eye and tissue donations.

Arpaio started the "I DO" program in 2007 with the hope of getting 10,000 inmates to eventually agree to be organ donors. Even with such an ambitious goal, the program has even exceeded Arpaio's own expectations. With Tuesday's sign-up numbers, over 16,500 inmates have now volunteered to donate their organs.

"A lot of inmates know they owe a debt to society for their criminal transgressions. Perhaps this is their collective way of making amends in some way," Arpaio says.



The Sheriff says that the “ I DO” program initially garnered some controversy but that it quickly subsided once critics understood all donors are carefully vetted.

“I know not every inmate is healthy enough to be deemed appropriate as an organ donor,” Arpaio says. “But that is also true of society as a whole. Organ donation is simply a numbers game. And we have to get higher numbers of willing donors. Then let the medical professionals decide which organs are healthy enough to be transplanted.”

Media are welcome to witness the sign-up process on Thursday, April 30th at 1:30PM and interview inmates as to why they are participating in it. Please meet a PIO at the West Gate of Tent City, off Durango Road and just west of the Estrella Jail or contact the on call PIO for more information.

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