Insights from Hispanic Donor Data: Advancing Multicultural Education and Resources in Tissue Donation

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Background: Multicultural education remains significantly underrepresented in health literature, particularly in areas such as tissue donation and transplantation. This gap is driven by multiple factors, including language barriers, unequal access to educational opportunities, limited cultural representation in medical materials, and the widespread presence of misinformation. Many existing resources are developed primarily in dominant languages and cultural frameworks, which can exclude non-native speakers and individuals from diverse backgrounds. As a result, large portions of the population may have limited exposure to accurate, accessible information about tissue donation, its processes, and its potential impact on patient outcomes.

Language barriers are a critical obstacle, as patients and communities with limited English proficiency often rely on translated materials that may be scarce, outdated, or lacking cultural nuance. Beyond language, differences in cultural beliefs, religious perspectives, and historical mistrust of healthcare systems can further influence perceptions of tissue donation. Without culturally responsive education, misconceptions may persist—for example, concerns about bodily integrity, eligibility, or fairness in allocation systems.

Educational inequities also contribute to this issue. Communities with fewer resources may have reduced access to healthcare outreach programs, limiting opportunities to learn about donation options. Additionally, the lack of diverse representation in health campaigns and academic literature can make it more difficult for individuals to see themselves reflected in these narratives, reducing engagement and trust.

Expanding multicultural education in tissue donation requires intentional strategies, including the development of linguistically and culturally appropriate materials, community-based outreach, and collaboration with trusted local leaders.

Methods: Versiti, Inc. has implemented a targeted outreach initiative to address disparities in tissue and organ donation awareness within underserved populations, with a specific focus on the Hispanic community in Milwaukee. Recognizing the need for cultural education, Versiti established a dedicated Hispanic Community Liaison position as part of a broader multicultural outreach program. This role was designed to improve engagement, build trust, and deliver education to the needs of Hispanic and Latino populations.

Demographic data highlights the importance of this initiative. In Milwaukee County, approximately one in six residents identifies as Hispanic or Latino, representing nearly 18% of the population. Additionally, 52% of the population identifies as non-Caucasian, yet only about 25% of individuals within these groups are registered organ and tissue donors. More broadly, one in every two residents belongs to a racial or ethnic minority group, proving the critical need

for inclusive and representative health education strategies. Through the implementation of cultural outreach efforts, Versiti has made measurable progress in increasing awareness and education surrounding tissue donation within the Hispanic community.

The significance of expanding multicultural education in this field is further emphasized by the ongoing demand for donation. Each year, approximately 2.5 million tissue transplantation procedures are performed, while more than 45,000 organ transplants occur nationwide. Despite this demand, disparities in donor registration persist among minority populations.

Building on this cultural foundation, Versiti's Hispanic Outreach program developed a tissue donation–focused adaptation of Lotería as an innovative educational tool. (Figure 1.) Lotería is a traditional game of chance with origins in 18th-century Europe that was later adapted and popularized in Mexico, where it became a culturally significant pastime. Like bingo, Lotería uses illustrated cards instead of numbered balls, with each image—such as "La Sirena" or "El Corazón"—carrying symbolic and cultural meaning. Over time, the game has become a staple in Hispanic and Latino communities, often used in social gatherings, festivals, and educational settings due to its interactive and accessible format.

Versiti's version of Lotería that was created by the Hispanic Community Liaison in which this version integrates health education into a familiar and engaging activity. During gameplay, each card corresponds to a specific type of tissue, and as cards are called, the host provides brief explanations of how that tissue is used in transplantation and healing. (Figure 2.) This approach transforms passive learning into an interactive experience, allowing participants to engage directly with donation concepts in a culturally relevant context. As part of its expanded outreach efforts in Milwaukee, Versiti has incorporated this and similar hands-on, community-centered activities at events, enhancing both participation and understanding while addressing gaps in awareness among Hispanic and Latino populations.

Results: Versiti's multicultural outreach strategy in Milwaukee is actively applied through active engagement at cultural community events and in trusted public spaces that serve predominantly Hispanic and Latino populations. Current initiatives include educational outreach at Mexican Fiesta, Cinco de Mayo, and Día de los Muertos walks and memorials, as well as participation in community-centered gatherings such as the Custom Lowrider Show by Lolo Blvd and the Caminata Contra el Cáncer. Versiti also extends its educational presence through Spanish-language radio promotions, Lotería game day events, and in heavily populated Latino areas, including local DMVs, hospitals, and inner-city high schools. By providing education in meaningful settings, Versiti strengthens community trust and increases awareness of tissue and organ donation, directly supporting its broader goal of reducing educational gaps and increasing participation among underserved populations.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the data and outreach outcomes demonstrate that cultural education strategies, such as Lotería, can significantly improve engagement and awareness of tissue donation among underrepresented populations in Milwaukee. The observed increase in participation—illustrated by event engagement trends—supports the effectiveness of Versiti's targeted Hispanic outreach model, which combines community presence, bilingual education,

and interactive tools such as Lotería to deliver meaningful health information. By meeting individuals in trusted cultural spaces and addressing barriers related to language, representation, and misinformation, this approach furthers greater understanding and trust in tissue donation.

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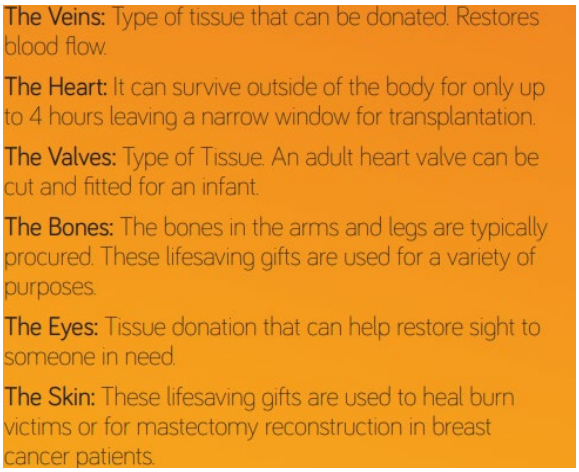
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Tables and Figures:



Figure 1. Examples of the Lotería calling cards used at events. (image above)



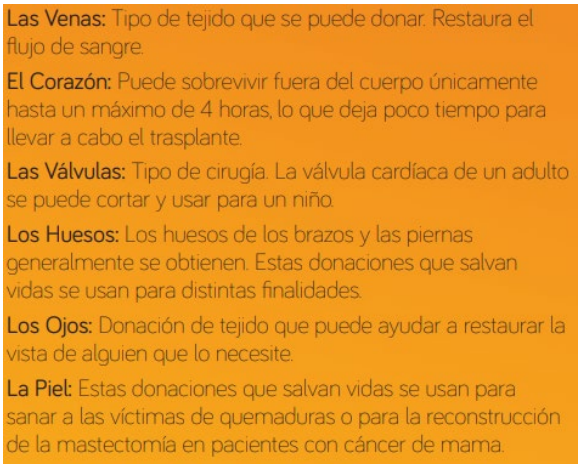


Figure 2: Examples of current educational material used during gameplay that explain the role of donated tissues in transplantation and healing as each card is called. (images above)

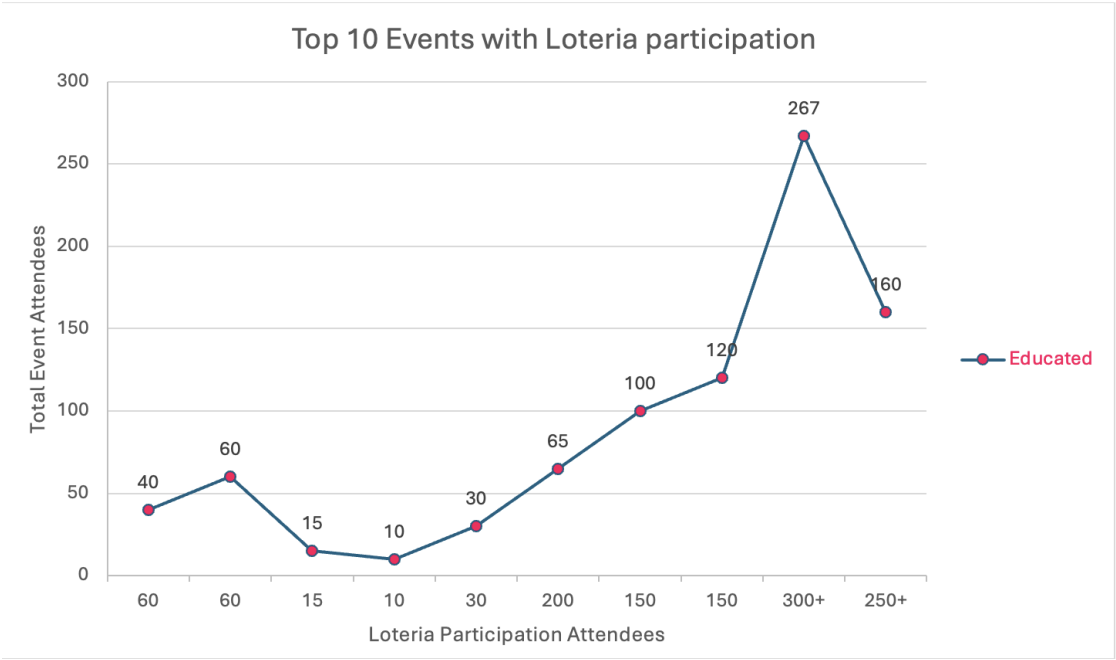


Figure 3: Information presented above shows clear upward trends that as participation of Lotería increases, the number of educated attendees also rises. This suggests that community-based, culturally relevant materials such as Lotería are highly effective tools for increasing awareness about tissue donation. Data provided by Erika Ysaias, Senior Partner Community Education.

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Culturally Relevant Education. Community Trust. More Lives Healed.

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BACKGROUND

Multicultural education remains significantly underrepresented in health literature, particularly in areas such as tissue donation and transplantation. Language barriers, unequal access to education, limited cultural representation, and misinformation contribute to persistent knowledge gaps.

Cultural beliefs, religious perspectives, historical mistrust, and educational inequities can influence perceptions and result in misconceptions about tissue donation.

Expanding multicultural education requires linguistically and culturally appropriate materials, community-based outreach, and collaboration with trusted local leaders.

METHODS

Versiti Inc. has implemented a targeted outreach initiative to address disparities in tissue and organ donation awareness among underserved populations, with a focus on the Hispanic community in Milwaukee.

- Established a Hispanic Community Liaison position within a broader multicultural outreach program.
- Leveraged demographic insights to guide culturally responsive education and engagement strategies.
- Developed a tissue donation–focused adaptation of Lotería—an interactive, culturally familiar game—to teach about tissue types and their life-saving impact.
- Delivered education through community events, trusted public spaces, and partnerships with local leaders.

WHY IT MATTERS

Each year, ~2.5 million tissue transplantation procedures and 45,000+ organ transplants are performed nationwide, yet disparities in donor registration persist among minority populations.

THE LOTERÍA APPROACH

Versiti's custom Lotería game integrates health education into a familiar, engaging activity.

- Each card represents a specific tissue
- As cards are called, the host explains how that tissue is used in transplantation and healing
- Transforms passive learning into an interactive, culturally relevant experience
- Enhances engagement, understanding, and trust within the community

EXAMPLES OF LOTERÍA CALLING CARDS



Used during events to introduce each tissue.

EXAMPLES OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

CORAZÓN (HEART VALVE)
Helps replace or repair damaged heart valves so the heart can pump blood properly.

HUESO (BONE)
Used in bone grafts to help rebuild and strengthen bones.

CÓRNEA (CORNEA)
Restores sight for people with corneal disease or injury.

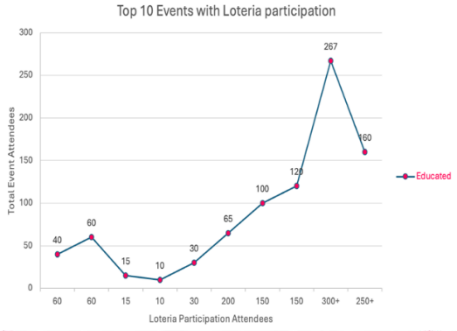
Brief explanations provided as each card is called.

RESULTS

Versiti's multicultural outreach strategy is actively applied through engagement at cultural events, trusted community spaces, and Spanish-language media.

- Mexican Fiesta, Cinco de Mayo, Dia de los Muertos walks & memorials
- Custom Lowrider Show by Lolo Blvd, Caminata Contra el Cáncer
- Spanish-language radio promotions & Lotería game days
- Presence in DMVs, hospitals, and inner-city high schools

Lotería Participation vs. Educated Attendees



Community Reach & Impact

(By Outreach Channel or Location)

- Active engagement at cultural community events and trusted public spaces
- Spanish-language radio, Lotería game days, and bilingual promotions
- Outreach in DMVs, hospitals, and inner-city high schools
- Strengthens community trust, increases awareness of tissue & organ donation, and reduces educational gaps in underserved populations

OUR COMMUNITY. OUR MISSION. OUR IMPACT.

MILWAUKEE BY THE NUMBERS

~18% of Milwaukee County residents identify as Hispanic or Latino

52% of the population identifies as non-Caucasian

~25% of individuals in these groups are registered organ & tissue donors

1 in 2 residents belongs to a racial or ethnic minority group

*Data sources: U.S. Census Bureau, local health reports, Versiti internal data

OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

- Culturally Relevant Education in Trusted Community Spaces
- Stronger Community Trust & Increased Awareness of Tissue Donation
- Bilingual (Spanish & English) Materials & Communications
- Interactive Tools (Lotería) that Build Engagement & Understanding

Donación de Tejidos
Da Vida. Da Esperanza. Da Futuro.

CONCLUSION

Data and outreach outcomes demonstrate that cultural education strategies like Lotería significantly improve engagement and awareness of tissue donation among underrepresented populations in Milwaukee. The upward trends in participation and education reinforce the effectiveness of Versiti's targeted Hispanic outreach model.

- Meet individuals in trusted cultural spaces
- Address barriers of language, representation, and misinformation
- Foster understanding and trust in tissue donation