

Organ and Tissue Procurement

Introduction

The Lions of North Carolina are dedicated to the prevention of blindness and the restoration of sight. Since the 1950's the Lions have been instrumental in educating the public of the need for donation. Recent Legislative actions have dramatically changed the way we need to promote organ and tissue donation. This manual will guide you through these changes and provide the information necessary for your Club to establish a successful program for organ and tissue donation.

Organ and Tissue Procurement

History

The Lions of North Carolina are dedicated to the prevention of blindness and the restoration of sight. Since the 1950's the Lions have been instrumental in educating the public of the need for donation. The Lions played an important role in the early development and growth of the North Carolina Eye Bank, by providing financial support and securing eye wills. Over the years our role has changed.

On November 14, 1999 the NCLF Board of Directors adopted the following position statement. "The North Carolina Lions Foundation shall be the education arm for the humanitarian acts of organ donation, procurement and transplantation of eye tissue."

This position statement recognizes the need not only to promote the donation of eye tissue but to also promote the donation of other organs.

Recent Changes

The passage of House Bill 1372 “The Heart Prevails” and the establishment of an online registry for donation have changed the way we will promote donation.

On October 1, 2007 House Bill 1372 “The Heart Prevails” legislation became law. The bill was introduced in April 2007 in order to *convert the **heart-on-the-license symbol, and those in the current DMV registry, to legal, first-person consent for organ and eye donation in North Carolina.*** Prior to passage of this legislation the heart on your driver’s license only reflected you intention to be a donor. This new law will no doubt save many more lives through donation.

Below are some important facts about the law.

Key Facts about HB1372:

It converts the heart-on-license and the correlating names in the donor registry to legal first person consent. This means that next-of-kin can not change a donor's decision.

Those already in the registry will be grandfathered and the heart on their license/name in registry will convert to first person consent.

It is important for donors to share their wishes with their family as next-of-kin will be notified of their loved one's decision at the time of death and consulted for a medical/social history.

The heart indicates organ and eye donation ONLY, not tissue. As in the past, families will be approached and given the opportunity to consent for tissue donation.

Names of those with the heart symbol on their license are kept in a confidential database utilized only at the time of death by authorized donation agencies.

Donor cards are still a legal document and may be used if requested. However, signed cards are not entered into the donor registry and must be carried at all times. The card must be present at the time of donation.

The new Donate Life North Carolina Organ, Tissue and Eye Online Registry was launched on April 1, 2008. This secure web site will allow individuals to register online to be a donor. The new site marks a major development in the donation community as thousands of people in North Carolina are still in critical need of life-saving transplants.

Go to www.donatelifenc.org to register and to learn more about giving the gift of life.

How to set up an Organ and Tissue Donation Program in your Club

Find a member of your club who has an interest in promoting Organ and Tissue Donation in your community. There might be a member of your club that has received a transplant or has a family member who has received or is on the waiting list.

Send their name to your District Chair for Organ and Tissue Donation

Invite your District Chair to present a program to your club.

Promoting Organ and Tissue Donation does not have to be an additional project for your Club to take on. When you have other events such as sponsoring the Vision Van or a fundraiser, have a table set up with information on Organ and Tissue Donation.

Have you made the commitment to be a donor?

Say Yes To Donation

Why should you consider donating your organs or tissues? Everyday, 16 people die while waiting for a transplant. Every 12 minutes a new name is added to the waiting list. Currently there are almost 3,000 North Carolinians waiting for a transplant. Every year, thousands of people go blind due to eye diseases and injuries. Many of these could have their sight restored with corneal transplants and other medical procedures.

Saying “Yes to Donation” is simple. When you renew your driver license say yes by having the red heart symbol placed on your license. You also may register online at donatelifenc.org.

North Carolina Lions are dedicated to the prevention of blindness and the restoration of sight. Our role in Organ and Tissue Donation is one of education and awareness. Spread the word of the importance and need for donation. The promotion of donation does not have to be a burden or additional project for your club. When you are having your current projects simply set up a table with brochures or have a club member hand them out.

For more information visit one of these web sites:

www.carolinadonorservices.org

www.lifesharecarolinas.org

www.nceyebank.org

www.donatelifenc.org

Organ Donation Facts

Q Are all families approached about the option of organ and tissue donation?

A Federal law requires that all families of deceased patients be offered the option of organ and/or tissue/cornea donation, depending on what can be recovered.

Q Is it adding insult to injury by asking for organ/tissue donation at such a time of tragedy and loss?

A After the death of a loved one, there are many decisions a family needs to make, including decisions about funeral arrangements and organ and tissue donation. Many families who have made the decision to donate have said that donation has helped them with their grieving.

Q Are there religious issues with organ/tissue donations?

A Most religions throughout the world support organ/tissue donation as a humanitarian act of kindness or stewardship. You are encouraged to discuss this with your own minister, priest, rabbi or hospital chaplain.

Q Would my family member feel any pain if his or her organs were donated?

A No, when your loved one is deceased he/she no longer feels pain.

Q What happens next if we give our permission for organ/tissue donation?

A Your family is given time with your loved one to say goodbye. The donation team evaluates which organs/tissues can be used, and blood samples are taken for the matching process with potential recipients. After the most needy recipients are located, a surgery is scheduled with a team of surgeons and specialists trained in organ/tissue recovery. After the donation surgery, the body is prepared for the funeral home of your choice.

Q How long will it take to complete the organ and/or tissue recovery?

A Timing can vary, depending on the number of organs and/or tissues recovered and the location of the transplant recovery teams. The actual donation surgery can range from three to seven hours. From the time you give consent until the time your loved one is released for funeral preparation, the average time frame is around 20 hours.

Q What happens next if we agree to the removal of the ventilator or other supports, but decide not to donate organs/tissues?

A The machines are removed and your loved one's heart eventually stops beating. The body is sent to the funeral home of your choice. If an autopsy is performed, it's done before the body is sent to the funeral home.

Q How do I become a donor?

A Say "yes" to donation on your driver's license. Register on-line at www.donatelifenc.org. Express your wishes to your family.

Q What organs and tissues can be donated and how are they used?

A Organs that can be donated include the heart, lungs, liver, pancreas, kidneys, and small intestine. Organs are used to save lives by replacing diseased organs with healthy ones. Tissues that can be donated include skin, bone, corneas, heart valves and veins. Skin grafts are used in burn victims; bone, tendons and ligaments can be used in reconstructive surgeries; corneas are transplanted to give sight; heart valves are used in valve replacement surgery, common in children, and leg veins can be used in heart bypass surgery.

Q Is there any cost to my family if I am an organ/tissue donor?

A No, all costs associated with donation are paid by the organ procurement agency. Your family is only responsible for hospital charges before the death declaration and for funeral expenses.

Q Will becoming a donor affect the quality of medical care I receive?

A Absolutely not. Medical care is always based on what is necessary to save a patient's life. Patients can be considered for donation only after they are declared legally dead.

Q Is there an age limit for donation?

A No. Potential donors are evaluated on an individual basis, regardless of age.

Q Is it true that only rich people get transplants?

A No. Factors such as race, gender, age, and income or celebrity status are never considered when determining who receives an organ. The organ allocation and distribution system is based on many factors including blood type, length of time on waiting list, geographical location, severity of illness and other medical criteria. There is NO way to buy a place on the waiting list.

Q Are there any racial barriers to donation and matching organs?

A No. Race is not a barrier, nor is it a criteria for organ placement. A computer database matches organ donors with potential recipients according to medical suitability. However, patients waiting for kidney transplants are more likely to have an antigen match with a donor of the same race.

Q If I am in good health can I sell my organs for money?

A No! It is against the law to buy or sell organs in the United States.

Q Can I be a donor if I have or have had cancer?

A People who have or have had some forms of cancer can be eye donors. They could be an organ and tissue donor if they have been cancer-free for at least five years.

Q Can my organs be used if I die at home?

A Unfortunately, no. Organs must have a continuous blood and oxygen supply to be suitable for transplantation. Only individuals, who have been declared brain dead, usually in a hospital intensive care unit, have the potential to be organ donors. However, tissue donation can occur when someone dies at home.

Q What does "brain death" mean?

A Brain death is the irreversible and complete cessation of all brain and brain stem function. It means there is no blood flow through the brain or brain stem and the patient has stopped responding to outside stimuli. It is considered legal death and allows a death certificate to be signed. Brain death is not the same as being in a coma, since coma patients still have brain function and respond to stimuli.

Q If I am a donor, will there be a delay in funeral services?

A In most cases, no. Usually, the procedure can be completed and the body released to the funeral home the next day.

Q Can I still have an open casket funeral?

A Yes. Organ and tissue recoveries are conducted in the operating room under the direction of qualified surgical personnel. An incision is made, closed, and dressed; therefore, the body's appearance is not changed by the donation process. Also, the identity of the donor family is kept confidential so no one will know that donation took place.

Q Can I still be an organ donor and also donate my body to science?

A If you are an organ or tissue donor, a medical school will not accept your remains for teaching purposes. However, if you're an eye donor, you may donate your body to a medical school. Some research institutions will accept your body for research after organ and tissue donation.

Q What's the symbol for supporting organ/tissue transplants?

A Green ribbon pins have come to mean sharing the gift of life through organ and tissue donation. Wearing a green ribbon helps create awareness about the urgent need for organ and tissue donors.

Q How many people are waiting for organs in our country?

A Right now, 85,000 Americans are waiting for life-saving organ transplants.

Q How many people are waiting for transplants in NC?

A More than 3,000 North Carolinians need life-saving organ transplants.

Q How many tissue transplants are performed each year in the U.S.?

A More than 900,000 tissue transplants are performed each year.

Q How many people receive the "gift of sight" each year in the U.S.?

A About 45,000 cornea transplants are performed each year, making this one of the most frequently performed human transplant procedures. Since 1961, more than 549,889 cornea transplants have been performed.

Q When was the first human heart transplant?

A In 1967, a South African heart surgeon named Christian Barnard performed the first human heart transplant.

Q When was the successful living donor transplant done?

A In 1954, a kidney was transplanted from a healthy 23-year-old identical twin to his brother, who had chronic kidney failure.