

Illinois Donor Consent for Organ/Tissue Donation: What It Means for Hospitals

- With Illinois' implementation of donor consent for organ and tissue donation, the hospital role in the donation process remains the same. Hospitals remain responsible for identifying potential donors, referring potential donors to Gift of Hope (800/545-GIFT) for evaluation in a timely manner, and working with us to support potential donors and the needs of their families.
- The possibility of a patient's existing donor consent through the new Illinois donor consent registry makes it even more important that hospital staff consult Gift of Hope about the patient's donor eligibility and registration status before the family is approached about donation.
- Gift of Hope remains responsible for speaking with families regarding the consent for donation and the process. The only change for families is that if the patient has already registered as a donor in Illinois' donor consent registry, the family will not be required to make an additional consent decision.

The Process

- In instances of imminent death and a family's questions about organ and tissue donation, we most effectively serve the family and their needs through a team approach involving both Gift of Hope and hospital staff.
- Hospital staff contact Gift of Hope for consult and referral at 800/545-GIFT. As trained specialists on organ and tissue donation, Gift of Hope personnel:
 - Will determine the patient's medical eligibility for donation.
 - Will determine the status of an existing consent for donation through the Illinois donor consent registry.
- If the patient has registered donor consent, the Secretary of State's office will provide Gift of Hope with an affidavit to share with family members regarding their loved one's donor registration. Our coordinators will spend time with family members to explain the donation process and answer questions or concerns they may have.
- In cases of organ donation, Gift of Hope coordinators will talk with family members and provide the affidavit at the hospital. In cases of tissue-only donation, we will mail copies of the donor consent affidavit to the family and to the hospital—the same way that we currently provide copies of the consent document. If a family requests a copy of the consent affidavit sooner, we will arrange to have it faxed to the hospital or funeral home, or deliver to another location for the family as needed.
- If the patient has not registered donor consent, or if he or she is under age 18, Gift of Hope coordinators must still obtain consent from legal next-of-kin at the time of the potential donor's death.
- Family consent is still required for organ donation after cardiac death (DCD). This is because donor consent takes effect only after death has been declared, and the DCD process necessitates consent prior to the declaration of death.
- Whether consent is provided from the donor or from the family, Gift of Hope's role continues to be one of support for the donor patient's family both during and after the donation process.