

# Donation Process

## The 7 Steps of the deceased organ, eye and tissue donation process



### Sign Up. Save Lives.

- Donation often begins with a person's consent to be a donor by registering their donation decision. Signing up does not guarantee a person will be able to donate their organs, eyes or tissues – and it is often many years before donation becomes possible. But, it is the first step to being eligible to save lives.

### Lifesaving Efforts

- Whether in a hospital or at the scene of an accident, the emergency medical personnel immediately begin lifesaving procedures. At this point, whether or not the person is a registered donor is not considered.
- Every effort is made to save a patient's life. Patient is put on mechanical support and clinical evaluations are done to determine severity of patient's injuries/illness.

### Patient

- Once it is determined a patient may not survive, the hospital must refer the patient to the local organ, eye and tissue recovery organization in their area.
- Information about the deceased patient is given to the recovery organization to determine whether he/she has the potential to be a donor. If the person is a candidate for donation, a representative from the organization travels to the hospital to complete an evaluation.

### Evaluation

- The recovery organization works with hospital staff to evaluate whether donation may be an option.
- The recovery organization searches the state registry to see if the person is registered as a donor. If so, this serves as legal authorization for donation. If the deceased has not registered, the recovery organization will ask the patient's legal next of kin for authorization.

### Family Discussion. Family Care.

- Once the patient is pronounced brain dead or the family has decided to discontinue ventilator support, the recovery organization works with hospital staff to talk with the patient's legal next of kin.
- A list of matched recipients, based on a variety of factors, is provided to the recovery organization by United Network of Organ Sharing. Most organs are matched with patients in the area where the organs were recovered. The others are shared with patients in other regions of the country.

### Donation Surgery

- While the search for matching recipients is under way, the deceased donor's organs are maintained mechanically to keep blood containing oxygen flowing to the organs. The condition of each organ is carefully monitored.
- Surgical teams remove the organs and tissues in an operating room. First, organs are recovered, and then tissues such as bone, cornea and skin. Body integrity is a priority and all incisions are surgically closed.
- The recovery representative arranges the transportation of the organs to transplant hospitals of the intended recipients.

### We Keep Caring

- Donor families continue to receive care in the months following their gift of life. Families receive follow up letters telling them how many lives their loved one saved. In addition, donation and grief support materials are sent to the family and ongoing donation follow up information over the next several months. This correspondence can include the opportunity for donor and recipient families to correspond and eventually meet.

Time is critical when it comes to organ transplants. Below are the times each organ has between recovery and transplant to still be a viable organ.

