When to Call For Organ Donation Candidates

Call within one (1) hour:
- Every vented patient with a neurological injury and a Glasgow Coma Score of 5 or less.
- Every vented patient being evaluated for brain death.
- Every vented patient being evaluated for withdrawal of support or terminal wean (prior to removal of support).

Organ Donation After Brain Death

A ventilator dependent patient who has a non-recoverable illness or injury that has caused neurological devastation and/or system failure who is declared brain dead.

Organ Donation After Cardiac Death (DCD)

DCD is another donation option when one does not meet brain death criteria. It is defined as organ recovery from patients who are pronounced dead on the basis of irreversible cessation of circulatory and pulmonary function.

- A vent dependent patient who has a non-recoverable illness or injury that has caused neurological devastation and/or system failure who is declared brain dead.

The RN should call Gift of Life within one hour of learning there is going to be a discussion of terminal wean.

- Due to the poor prognosis the decision is made to remove the patient from the ventilator in accordance with hospital policy.

Determining Suitability And Requesting Consent

ONLY Gift of Life can determine who is a potential donor. Assume everyone has potential.

The Gift of Life Coordinator collaborates with the Healthcare Team to plan the family approach.

Per policy, staff should not initiate a donation related discussion with the family.

Gift of Life is the designated requestor for organ and tissue donation. All donation discussions shall be initiated by Gift of Life.

Families and Donation

The patient and/or the family are to receive clear information about the patient’s condition and about donation options. Effective communication with the family includes sufficient time to absorb the prognosis.

Donation options should be conveyed in a compassionate, honest, sensitive, and caring manner. Throughout the donation process, staff shall provide respectful and compassionate care to the patient and family.

When to Call for Tissue Donation

Call Gift of Life at 1.800.482.4881 within one hour of every expiration.

Every expired patient is a potential tissue donor.

Gift of Life should be called within one hour, even if you are unable to reach the family or Medical Examiner. Simply inform us that the family is not aware of the death.

Donation Laws

- Medical Examiner collaborates with Gift of Life so families can donate.
- Anyone who documents that he/she would like to be a donor will have their wishes fulfilled if they are eligible to donate.
- Uniform anatomical gift law requires Gift of Life and hospitals to collaborate prior to consent on patient care to make donation a viable outcome.
- Hospitals must maintain patient stability until Gift of Life can evaluate and approach the family and until the family can make a donation decision.

Donation Resources

Gift of Life
800.482.4881
Phyllis Oxley x 69887
Karen Forier, Gift of Life 800.482.4881

Gift of Life
Customer Service Hotline
866.500.5801 ext.1411