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Donate Life Northwest!

Frequently Asked Questions About Oregon's New Donor Registry

Q. What is the Donor Registry?

A. The Donate Life Northwest Registry is a secure and confidential Oregon statewide database listing everyone who has indicated their wish to be an organ, eye and tissue donor. It is accessible only to authorized employees of organ, eye and tissue procurement agencies. The Registry is in place as of April 2.

Q. How can I join the Registry?

A. The fastest, easiest way is to sign up online at www.donatelifenw.org or call 503.494.7888 or 1.800.452.1369 for a paper form if you do not have email.

Q. What is the difference between having a donor designation on my driver's license and signing up on the Registry?

A. The donation code on a driver's license is considered intent to donate. Signing up on the Registry is considered consent to donate, and for individuals 18 and older, it does not require the signature of any other person. For registrants under 18, the consent of a parent or legal guardian is required.

Q. Who may sign up on the Registry?

A. Oregonians age 13 years and older, whether or not they have a "D" on their license, are asked to join the online Registry. It documents your decision and is the best means of ensuring that your decision to be a donor will be known and honored.

Q. Is my information in the Registry secure?

A. Yes. All personal information is kept confidential because Oregon law prohibits Donate Life Northwest Registry information from being sold or shared with any company or government agency. Your information is stored in a secure database, accessible only to authorized organ, eye and tissue recovery personnel.

Q. What if I change my mind?

A. Those who sign up may take their name out of the Registry, alter

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personal information or change donation preferences anytime. Log on to www.donatelifenw.org, or call 503.494.7888 or 1.800.452.1369 if you submitted a paper registration form and have no email.

Q. Is there anyone who is not allowed to donate?

A. Do not rule yourself out due to age or health! People of all ages and medical histories – even those with diabetes, cancer, or Hepatitis C – should consider themselves potential donors. Your medical condition at the time of death will determine what organs and tissue can be donated.

Q. What organs and tissues can I donate?

A. Heart * Liver * Small Intestine * Kidneys * Lungs * Pancreas * Bone * Eyes/Corneas * Skin * Heart Valves & Associated Cardiovascular Tissue * Connective Tissues

Q. Do I have to die to save lives through donation?

A. No. While you are living you can donate a kidney, or part of your liver or lung. You also can help by donating blood or bone marrow.

Q. How does the donation process work?

A. Once a patient has been declared dead in a hospital, authorized organ, eye and tissue recovery personnel confirm the patient's listing in the Registry. A trained Designated Requestor shares that information with the family and puts them in touch with a coordinator from the donation agency, who helps them through the donation process, which includes answering a set of medical and social history questions. While the coordinator works with the family, a team of medical specialists determines which organs and tissues are suitable for transplantation. Once the evaluation is complete, the suitable organs and tissues are recovered. The body is restored to its natural shape and treated with the highest degree of respect and care.

Q. How are donors screened?

A. Donors are evaluated on a case-by-case basis to ensure that their organs and tissues are medically suitable to donate. After this evaluation, organs and tissues receive further testing before they are approved for transplantation.

Q. What happens to my donated organs and tissues?

A. Patients are registered with a national computer network that matches donated organs with potential recipients. Criteria such as blood and tissue type, body size, geographic location and medical urgency determine recipients. No one can advance their position on the waiting list based on income, social position or race.

Q. How much will organ and tissue donation cost my family?

A. It costs nothing to donate, and no costs are passed on to a donor's family or estate.

Q. Will my medical care be affected if people know I am a donor?

A. Never! Your health care providers will make all efforts to save your life. An entirely separate team of health care professionals handle the donation process. Furthermore, organ, eye, and tissue recovery happens only after all life-saving efforts have been exhausted and death has been legally declared.

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Q. I don't know if my religion supports donation.

A. All major religions practiced in the U.S. support donation as a charitable act.

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

A. No. Organs can only be donated by individuals who have been declared brain dead, or in some cases, seriously brain-injured patients can donate organs after cardiac death in a hospital. However, tissue and eye donation can occur when someone dies at home. Your family needs to tell the medical personnel and funeral home of the desire to donate.



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

A. If you are an organ and tissue donor, the medical school will not accept the whole body donation. You can be an eye donor and still donate your body to science. Whole body donation may be arranged in advance by completing additional forms.

Q. Can my family go against my wishes to be a donor?

A. In some circumstances, unfortunately, yes. If the deceased person had not signed up on a registry or is under 18 years old, the legal next of kin assumes responsibility for the decision to donate. Therefore, it is very important to discuss your wishes with your family.

How do Families Feel?

One of the first questions health care providers often ask us about the Registry is how families react to being notified that their loved one is a registered donor. In the vast majority of cases, knowing that their loved one is on the Donor Registry will be a very positive thing for families. Even in many cases where families had not previously discussed donation, hearing that their loved one had taken steps to record their decision makes it very easy for them to support and appreciate the opportunity to give the gift of life.

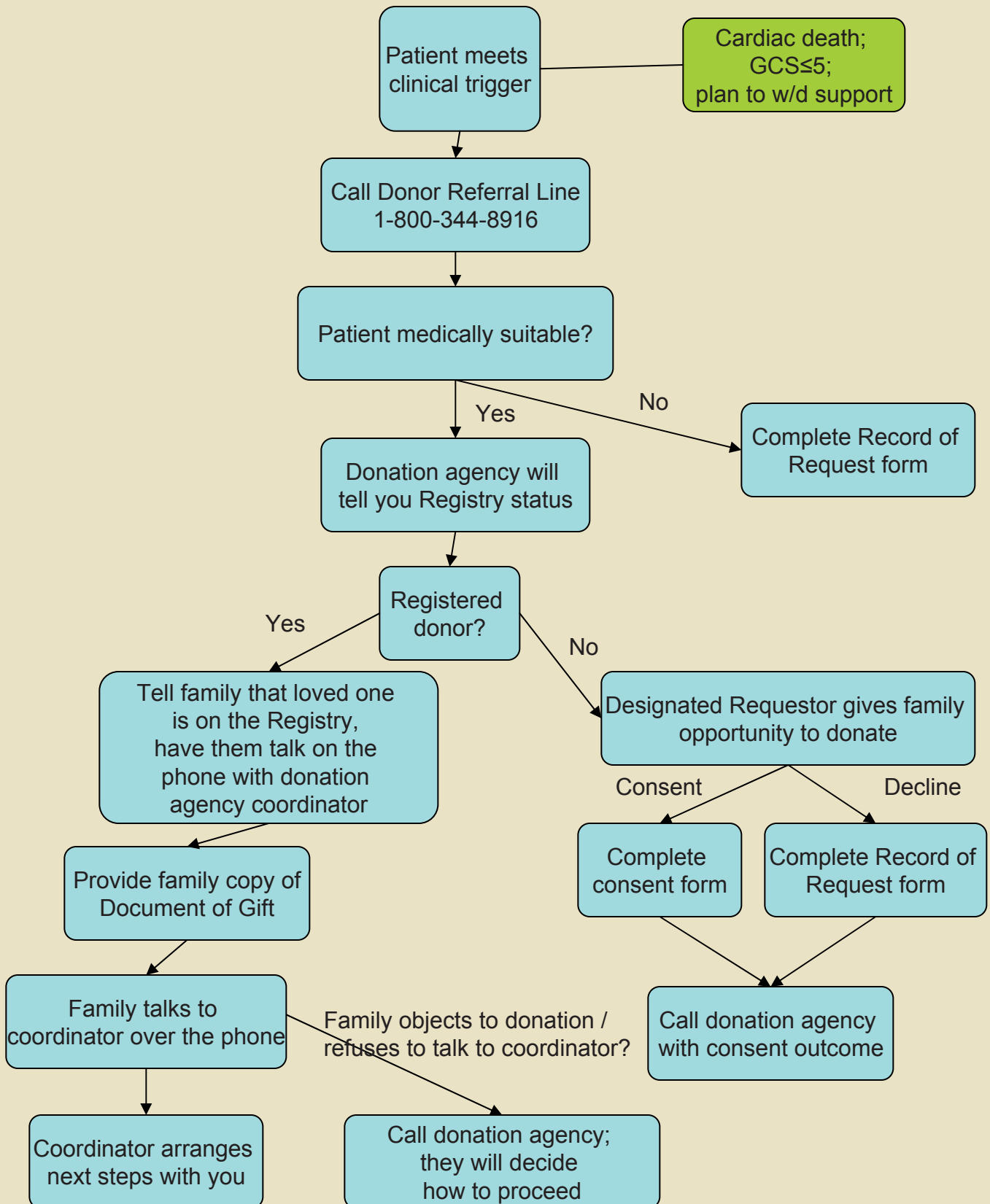
The most recent and complete study on families' reactions to donor designations appeared in *Progress in Transplantation*¹ in June 2006. The study, a review of survey responses from 569 donor families, examined families' perceptions about the donation discussion, comparing families of designated donors to non-designated donors. Key findings include:

- 75% of designated donor families perceived learning about their loved one's donor designation as helpful.
- Less than 10% of families perceived the designation notification as stressful or both stressful and helpful.
- The vast majority of families were comfortable with their loved one's decision to donate, regardless of designation status; 82% of designated donor families were comfortable, and 81% of non-designated donor families.

We can take comfort in knowing that honoring Designated Donor status increases the availability of life-saving and life-enhancing gifts, without jeopardizing the care of donor families.

1. "Family responses to donor designation in donation cases: a longitudinal study," *Progress in Transplantation*, Vol 16, No. 2, June 2006: 150 – 154.

Requesting Organ & Tissue Donation



Implementing a Registered Donor's Decision

1. When the patient meets the clinical trigger, call the referral line.
2. If the patient is medically suitable to be a donor, the donation agency coordinator will tell you if he/she is a Registered Donor or has a D on his/her drivers' license. If the patient is not on the Registry, the coordinator will advise you to have a trained Designated Requestor offer the family the opportunity to donate. The Designated Requestor will use life-centered language to approach the family and complete the consent form as usual.
3. If the patient is a Registered Donor, the coordinator will fax you a one-page "Document of Gift" showing the individual's informed consent to donate organs, eyes, and/or tissues. One copy should go to the family, and another into the patient's chart.
4. Let the family know about their loved one's Registry status, and tell them that a coordinator from the donation agency is on the phone to talk with them about fulfilling their loved one's decision. Please provide them a copy of the Document of Gift. See sample scripts below.
5. The coordinator will inform the family about the next steps in the donation process, and arrange to complete the medical and behavioral history questionnaire.
6. If the family refuses to come to the phone, call the donation agency coordinator back for more instructions. The donation agencies will decide how to proceed.

Sample wording for talking to families when their loved one is on the Donate Life Northwest Registry

After expressing condolences:

I just spoke with the Lions Eye Bank of Oregon and was informed that your husband Bill wanted to be a donor and gave consent for donation through the Donor Registry. Here is a copy of the paperwork that he filled out on the Registry. Nathan from the eye bank is on the phone to discuss fulfilling Bill's decision to become a donor.

If the family refuses to come to the phone:

I do need you to speak directly with the donation agency about your husband's decision.

Threads of Life Quilt Unveilings

Portland - Sunday, April 15th at 11:30 am
Governor Hotel, 611 SW 10th Ave

Eugene - Sunday, April 22nd at 2:30 pm
Eugene Public Library, 100 W 10th Ave

Medford - Saturday, April 21st at 2 pm
The Craterian Ginger Rogers Theater
23 S Central Ave

Bend - Friday, April 27th at 4 pm
Bend Public Library, 601 NW Wall St

Pendleton - Tuesday, May 1st at 2:30 pm
St. Anthony Hospital, 1601 SE Court Ave

All family and friends are welcome! To ensure
adequate seating, RSVP at 800.452.1369,
503.494.7888 or info@donatelifenw.org



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