

Media Release

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PHYSICIANS ENGAGED TO LEAD ON DONATION IN ONTARIO

Trillium Gift of Life Network initiative models success of similar programs internationally

Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN) is enhancing the organ and tissue donation program in Ontario, appointing specially trained critical care physicians to support hospitals as they integrate donation into quality end of life care.

Five Regional Medical Leads (RMLs) have already begun offering donation support to hospitals within defined geographic regions across the province. The next phase of the program, well underway, is to identify donation physicians who will champion donation *within* their individual hospitals, to ensure that opportunities to save lives through organ and tissue donation are identified and appropriately pursued in collaboration with TGLN.

Internationally, the addition of physician leadership to in-hospital donation teams has contributed to recent increases in donation performance in the United Kingdom and Australia. In Spain, a world leader in donation, physician leadership and accountability are key components of the system.

“The reality is, less than three per cent of deaths in hospital happen in a way that allows for the possibility of organ donation, because of the need to sustain a patient on a ventilator,” says Ronnie Gavsie, President and CEO of Trillium Gift of Life Network. “Enhancing physician leadership and responsibility will drive improvements in donation. Also, we will better support grieving families by giving them the opportunity to honour their loved ones’ donation wishes or make a choice on their loved ones’ behalf to save lives.”

“Organ and tissue donation in Spain is seen as an opportunity; not an obligation but a right, says Dr. Rafael Matesanz, Director of Spain’s National Transplant Organization. “By engaging physicians in the process and making them responsible and accountable for donation, Ontario is on the right track to building a positive donation culture.”

Each Regional Medical Lead reports to TGLN's Chief Medical Officer and is responsible for supporting hospital donation performance within a specific region. Regional Medical Leads assist with the promotion of donation policies in assigned hospitals and offer clinical and educational support to the donation team.

Donation-focused physicians are expected to be in place in Ontario hospitals with advanced critical care capacity by spring 2015.

Quick Facts:

- 62 hospital corporations in Ontario now refer potential donors to TGLN when a patient dies or is at risk of imminent death.
- Donation performance data, including routine notification and conversion rates, by hospital, is available at www.giftoflife.on.ca/en/publicreporting.htm.
- Over 1,500 Ontarians are waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant.
- One donor can save up to eight lives and improve the lives of up to 75 others.
- Families report that the opportunity they were given to save lives has been a source of comfort as they grieve the loss of their loved one.
- Donor registration gives families clear evidence of their loved one's donation wishes. This information is confidential and only accessed by TGLN at end of life to share a person's donation wishes with their family.
- It is very simple to register consent for organ and tissue donation in Ontario: at www.BeADonor.ca, or in person at any ServiceOntario centre.

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Trillium Gift of Life Network is a not-for-profit agency of the Government of Ontario responsible for planning, promoting, coordinating and supporting organ and tissue donation for transplantation across Ontario and improving the system so that more lives can be saved.