

ORGAN DONATION

I received a letter from a man who was critical of organ donation. He felt it was wrong to "mutilate" the body of a loved one.

I am a nurse in a busy critical care unit in Louisiana. Although our hospital does not perform organ transplants, it supports the organ donation program.

Not everyone is favorably inclined toward organ donation. Unfortunately, some common misconceptions exist that make a rational decision difficult. People need to know:

1. Hospitals do NOT sell organs. It is against the law.
2. The agency performing the organ removal uses artificial structures to replace long bones or eyes so the donor will look "natural"
3. When skin is removed it is taken only from areas of the body that will not be visible in an open casket.
4. All bodies are handled carefully and with the utmost respect.
5. The cost of surgery for organ donation is NOT charged to the family. It is the family of the recipient who pays.

When the time comes, it is the next of kin who makes the decision about an organ donation. Discussing this with your family while you are in good health will improve your chances of having your wishes followed. And it is always wise to carry a donor card in case of an accident.

What Does It Mean?

1. Critical care unit
2. Not everyone is favorably inclined toward organ donation.
3. When the time comes, it is the next of kin who makes the decision about an organ donation.

Questions:

1. Do hospitals sell organs?
2. Which area is taken off in skin removal?
3. Who pays the cost of surgery?
4. Who decides for or against organ donation when the time of death comes?

Discussion Points:

1. Are you willing to carry an organ donation card?
2. If your child were declared brain-dead, would you donate his or her usable organs?
3. What do you think about donating the parts of your body to charity?