



## **AOPPO Supports Giving Families the Opportunity to Consider Organ and Tissue Donation**

The Association of Organ Procurement Organizations (AOPPO) supports organ procurement organizations (OPOs) in their daily mission to help families make difficult decisions during a time of extreme grief. OPOs are acutely aware that their staff members are speaking to families in times of trauma and stress. Accordingly, organ procurement professionals are expertly trained on how best to work with families in these circumstances.

Donation is not simply a question, but a conversation between the OPO and the family. Aspects of the conversation include discussions about brain death, and any donor authorization decisions that have been documented and/or registered by the potential donor. If no record of donor authorization can be found, OPO personnel assist the family member(s) with end-of-life planning. Every family deserves to have this conversation take place at the most appropriate time possible so as to afford them the best opportunity to make these often sudden and unexpected decisions.

In speaking with families, organ procurement professionals take time to have the most meaningful and helpful interaction with each family to allow for a truly informed decision to be made. The goal is to assure that the family remains confident in the process and in their decision.

A majority of states now have first-person consent laws that allow individuals to officially designate themselves as organ and tissue donors on an official registry. Any person who legally documents his or her decision through a registry system will have his or her wishes honored at their time of death. In these instances, families are informed of their loved ones' decision by the OPO. Organ procurement professionals support the families of designated donors with the same care and respect as families' of individuals who have not registered. In most cases, they also provide services to families who decline donation.

AOPPO affirms that all OPOs engage families in an organ and tissue donation conversation at the appropriate time, which will ensure that everyone has the opportunity to make the best decision for them.