

CLOSING THE GAP:

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO MAXIMIZE ORGAN DONATION AND REDUCE THE WAIT FOR LIFESAVING ORGANS

Organ procurement organizations (OPOs) work every day to maximize organ donations and bring lifesaving organs to those on the transplant waiting list. Despite a 33 percent increase in organ donations in the United States since 2012, the need today still far outpaces availability. The members of the Association of Organ Procurement Organizations (AOPO) are dedicated to helping close this gap so that those in need receive donated organs in time to save their life.

AOPO URGES POLICYMAKERS TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS TO INCREASE ORGAN DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION:

1. Promote the use of organs from more complex donors

Removing the regulatory disincentives to using organs from donors that are older and medically complex, as well as from donors after circulatory death, would accelerate the increase of transplantation over time.

2. Improve hospital clinical support for organ donors and promote the use of organ recovery centers

Providing hospitals incentives to foster cooperation with OPOs in caring for donors and their families and providing the services needed to ensure successful donation, and removing financial disincentives to use centralized OPO surgical organ recovery centers, will reduce the burden of organ recovery on hospitals and increase organ donations.

3. Align the collection and reporting of data for a meaningful, independent OPO performance metric

Requiring all hospitals to report deaths of all inpatients placed on a ventilator will more accurately help determine medically suitable organ donation potential on a nationwide basis. Conducted through EHR meaningful use provisions, such data could be used to develop meaningful measures to allow for better OPO performance evaluation.

4. Ensure OPO access to donor hospital electronic health records (EHRs)

Requiring that OPOs have efficient access to necessary medical records will improve the organ donation process. While HIPAA regulations authorize the sharing of information for organ donation and transplantation purposes, hospital EHR systems have not been designed to permit OPOs to perform basic functions necessary to increase donations.