ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

SAMPLE CORONER/MEDICAL EXAMINER OFFICE

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Number:	XX-XXX
Title:	Organ and Tissue Donation Policy

Purpose: This procedure describes the process for handling organ and/or tissue donations through [INSERT NAME OF ORGAN PROCUREMENT ORGANIZATION (OPO)] within the [INSERT NAME OF CORONER OR ME OFFICE (C/ME)].

Procedure:

1. If the OPO receives authorization from legal next of kin, the OPO shall request that hospital staff contact the C/ME Office via usual dispatch channels
2. Dispatch will contact the on-call Investigator and provide necessary hospital staff contact information
3. The on-call Investigator will contact hospital staff and obtain preliminary information related to the case. If the dispatch is to contact the OPO, the Investigator shall advise OPO staff to have the hospital staff contact the C/ME.
4. If after discussion with hospital staff, the Investigator determines the case to be jurisdictional (an accepted case), the Investigator will respond as necessary and discuss the case with the C/ME or the Chief Deputy who will determine donation status. The Investigator will provide this result to the OPO.
5. If after discussion with hospital staff, the Investigator determines the case to be non-jurisdictional (not accepted, released) and authorization has been given by the next of kin (NOK), the Investigator will release jurisdiction and allow the OPO to proceed per their protocol. The Investigator will request that the NOK authorization form to be faxed to the C/ME office in **all** donation cases.

BRAIN DEATH CASES

In the event the C/ME Office is contacted by the OPO regarding a brain death case, the Investigator shall proceed as follows:

1. Speak with hospital staff once brain death is pronounced to determine jurisdiction and collect relevant information.

2. If non-jurisdictional and authorization has been given by the next of kin, the OPO may be authorized by this office to proceed. The authorization should be in writing.

3. If jurisdictional

    a. the Investigator shall respond and conduct a comprehensive death investigation to include photographing and assessing the body.

    b. The Investigator will ensure that the pronouncing physician signs the pronouncement section of the death certificate. Under no circumstances will an Investigator sign the pronouncement section of the death certificate for a brain death case.

    c. The Investigator will speak to the C/ME or the Chief Deputy to determine if the body may be released and authorized for harvest, or if an autopsy is required. If an autopsy is required, the C/ME or Chief Deputy may confer with a Forensic Pathologist to determine what, if anything at all, may be harvested prior to autopsy.

BEATING HEART DONATION

A "beating heart donation, also known as Donation after Cardiac Death, is when a patient is not going to be pronounced brain dead, but is nevertheless not expected to recover or survive once removed from life support. The pronouncement of death in these cases will typically happen in the operating room during the procedure for harvest. This requires the OPO to communicate with the Coroner's Office prior to the death of the patient. In the event the Coroner's Office is contacted regarding a "beating heart donation", the Investigator shall adhere to the following:

1. Upon notification of a "beating heart donation" case, the Investigator shall collect just enough information from hospital staff to determine jurisdiction.

The case shall not be logged or entered into the case management system until pronouncement. If possible, the patient's name will not be provided to the Investigator.

2. If the case is non-jurisdictional and the next of kin has authorized the harvest,

    a. The OPO shall be given written authorization from this office to proceed.

    b. Once pronouncement of death is complete, hospital staff is required to contact the Investigator to provide any follow-up information, including name and the time of death. The case may then be logged into the case management system as per policy.

3. If the case is jurisdictional,

    a. The Investigator will advise hospital staff and the OPO that an investigation must be conducted. The Investigator will notify the C/ME and/or Chief Deputy.

    b. The Investigator shall respond to the scene and make contact with hospital staff and the next of kin.

    c. The Investigator shall request that any admission blood samples be put on hold for the C/ME office.

    d. The Investigator, witnessed by hospital staff, will request and receive written authorization from the legal next of kin allowing the C/ME Office to have access to the necessary medical records and to proceed with the investigation.

    e. If the next of kin refuses, organ and/or tissue harvest will not be authorized by this office.

f. If written authorization is received, the Investigator shall review the patient's medical records and collect any necessary information regarding the facts and circumstances surrounding the case.

g. The Investigator will conduct an assessment of the body, but shall **not** photograph the body.

h. The Investigator will then contact the C/ME and/or Chief Deputy to determine if an autopsy is required.

i. If an autopsy is not required, authorization may be given to the OPO to conduct the harvest.

j. If an autopsy is required, the C/ME or Chief Deputy may confer with a Forensic Pathologist to determine what, if anything at all, may be harvested prior to autopsy.

k. Whether or not an autopsy is conducted, once pronouncement of death is made for a jurisdictional case, the attending physician shall sign the pronouncement block of the death certificate and any necessary follow-up information and time of death shall be collected by the Investigator. The cause and manner of death, once determined, will be certified by the C/ME Office.

l. Upon the pronouncement of death, the case may be entered and logged into the case management system.

m. After the pronouncement and harvest, the Investigator shall obtain photographs of the body.

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Coroner/Medical Examiner Signature Date