**HC2: Bioethics**

**Saskatchewan Organ And Tissue Donation**

The need for organs and tissue for transplants far outweighs the available supply. Becoming an organ or tissue donor is one way you can help alleviate this need, and it may be a decision that’s right for you. There are two ways to donate: living donation and deceased donation. Before any choice is made, it's important to talk to your family about your decision to donate.

***Living Donation***

You can be a living donor by providing a non-vital organ or tissue to a family member or another person in need. Living donation includes:

* **Amniotic membrane** - Donated after elective C-section deliveries, it is used in a number of eye surgery procedures.
* **Bone** - Most donated bone comes from hip replacement surgeries. Many surgical procedures require bone grafts. Bone aids in healing and strengthens and improves function.
* **Kidney** - About 40-50 per cent of kidney transplants in Saskatchewan are made possible through living donors.
* **Liver** - In living-donor transplants, surgeons remove a portion of a donor's liver.

***Deceased Donation***

Deceased donation happens when organs and tissue are available for transplant after someone has died. Deceased donation includes:

* Bone
* Cornea
* Heart and heart valves
* Lungs
* Liver
* Kidneys
* Pancreas
* Skin
* Tendons and ligaments

Organ and tissue donation is anonymous. However, the Saskatchewan Transplant Program does offer donors and recipients the opportunity to correspond in writing through de-identified letters delivered and received through the program.

**Fast Facts**

* ​One organ donor can save up to eight lives, and one tissue donor can improve the lives of more than 75 people.
* The first transplant in Saskatchewan, a kidney, took place just over 50 years ago on December 10, 1963.
* Over 800 kidney transplants have been performed in our province since 1963.
* Currently, about 90 people are waiting for a kidney transplant in Saskatchewan and a similar number are waiting for corneas.
* Approximately, 25 to 30 organ transplants take place each year in our province.
* In 2013, there were six multi-organ donors and 44 cornea donors in Saskatchewan.
* The oldest person to be an organ donor (kidney) in Canada was 92 years old.

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**Saskatchewan Transplant Program**

The Saskatchewan Transplant Program was established in 1989 to facilitate organ and tissue donation and transplantation for Saskatchewan residents. The transplant team includes physicians, surgeons, nurses, social workers, pharmacists and many other healthcare providers who offer services in both Saskatoon Health Region and Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region.

Through the program, individuals can donate or receive amniotic membrane, bone, corneas and kidneys (from both living and deceased donors), as well as ligaments and tendons. When patients need a heart, lung, liver or pancreas transplant, they are placed on the National Organ Wait List (a feature of the Canadian Transplant Registry), which is maintained by Canadian Blood Services. The Wait List allows for organs other than kidneys to be shared between provinces for patients in urgent need of a transplant.

When an organ becomes available, the Saskatchewan Transplant Program works with its affiliates across the country to assist Saskatchewan patients who are being assessed for, or have received, a heart, lung, liver or pancreas transplant. Coordinators are available to answer your questions about organ and tissue donation and transplantation 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Call switchboard at 1-306-655-8000 and ask for the organ and tissue donor coordinator on call.

The Saskatchewan Transplant Program operates two organ and tissue banks: the Tissue and Bone Bank and the Lions Eye Bank of Saskatchewan.

***Tissue and Bone Bank*** - This team obtains:

* Bone from living and deceased donors
* Heart valves from deceased donors, in cooperation with Alberta Health Services
* Amniotic membrane from elective C-section deliveries.

***Lions Eye Bank of Saskatchewan*** - This team obtains corneas from deceased donors for use in sight restoring corneal transplant surgery.

**Resources**

Click on the links below to learn more about organ and tissue donation.​

[Canadian Blood Services](https://www.blood.ca/)
[Canadian Society of Transplantation](http://www.cst-transplant.ca/)
[Canadian Transplant Association](http://www.organ-donation-works.org/english/home/)
[The Kidney Foundation of Canada](http://www.kidney.ca/page.aspx?pid=183)
[The Transplant Journey Guide Book](http://www.transweb.org/journey/recip_journey/)