The Role of Hospice and Palliative Care in Organ and Tissue Donation

Objectives

- Summarize the organ and tissue donation process.
- Identify the role of hospice and palliative care staff in the organ and tissue donation process.
- Develop an understanding of suitability requirements for organ and tissue donation.

Nebraska Organ Recovery

- Organ Procurement Organization
- Donation Service area includes:
  - Nebraska
  - Pottawattamie County, IA
- Not affiliated with any hospitals or transplant centers
- Facilitation of cadaveric organ and tissue donation
Need for Donation

• More than 120,000 people are waiting for organ transplants
  – 21 people die each day waiting
• Hundreds of thousands people benefit from tissue transplantation each year

Organ Donation

What can be recovered?

ONE Organ Donor can save up to 8 lives!

Organ Donation Suitability

1. Ventilated patients
2. Devastating injury or illness
3. Brain dead or meets DCD suitability

• No age restrictions
• Few medical restrictions
  – HIV, metastatic cancer
• Organ function
## Organ Donation Suitability

- **Brain Death**
  - Legal and ethical definition of death
  - Brain death is determined by hospital staff
    - “the complete and irreversible cessation of all functions of the entire brain”
- **DCD**
  - Death declared by cardiac and pulmonary criteria
  - Death determined by hospital staff
  - Candidates are under age 65 and have a high likelihood of death within 60 minutes of removal of life-sustaining therapies
  - C-spine fractures, ALS, etc. is also considered

## The Organ Donation Process

- **Referral**
  - Hospital staff notify of vented patients with devastating injury or illness
    - Loss of any brainstem reflexes or discussions about removal of life-sustaining therapies
- **Suitability Screening**
  - NORS staff determine medical suitability with the assistance from hospital staff

## The Organ Donation Process

- **Authorization**
  - NORS staff or designated requestor conversation with family about donation decisions
    1. Donor Designation
    2. Power of Attorney for Healthcare
    3. Legal Next-of-Kin
- **Donor Risk Assessment**
  - Medical and social risk screening with patient historian
    - Not Required
The Organ Donation Process

• Medical Management
  – Blood draw
  – Organ evaluation
  – Organ optimization

• Allocation
  – “waiting list” requested from UNOS
  – Offers to transplant centers for patients with priority

Tissue Donation

What can be recovered?

ONE tissue donor can have a profound effect on up to 60 lives!
Tissue Donation Suitability

- Any death
- Age limits
- Medical history is very important
- Tissue recovery within 12-24 hours of patient death
- No embalming

The Tissue Donation Process

- Referral
  - Hospital staff notify at time of death
- Suitability Screening
  - NORS staff determine medical suitability

The Tissue Donation Process

- Authorization
  - NORS staff or designated requestor conversation with family about donation decisions
    1. Donor Designation
    2. Power of Attorney for Healthcare
    3. Legal Next-of-Kin
- Donor Risk Assessment
  - Medical and social risk screening with patient historian
    • Required
## The Tissue Donation Process

- **Surgical Recovery**
  - 2 – 4 hour procedure

- **Transplantation**
  - Tissue is sent to processors who test, quarantine, and release for use
  - Viable for up to 5 years

## THE ROLE OF HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE STAFF IN DONATION

## What role does a hospice or palliative professional have?

- Referral of potential organ donation candidates
  - Patients who request information
  - Vented patients that are transitioning to the removal of life-sustaining therapies
  - Long-term vent patients that are transitioning to the removal of life-sustaining therapies
  - ALS, C-spine fractures, stroke, advanced lung disease, etc.
Role of hospice or palliative care staff

- Referral of potential tissue or eye donation candidates
  - Patients who request donation information
  - Patients deaths
    - General contraindications to tissue/eye donation:
      - Metastatic cancer
      - Age
        - >36 weeks gestation to 80 years (65 for female)
      - Dementia or Alzheimer’s w/out autopsy
      - Active infections

Donation Screening

- NORS staff will work with referring staff to perform the suitability screening.
- During this time numerous questions will be asked pertaining to patient medical history

Authorization for Donation

- It is the goal of Nebraska Organ Recovery to ensure that each family is allowed the best opportunity to make a good decision regarding donation
- Basic needs
- Healthcare team support
- NORS expertise
Support

- The palliative care and hospice professionals, along with NORS staff, will continue to support the family regardless of their donation decision.