

Campaign Life Coalition

305-104 Bond Street, Toronto, Ontario M5B 1X9
416-204-9749 fax: 416-204-1027 email: clc@lifesite.net www.lifesite.net

June 27, 2006

Media Release

New Organ Donation method Controversial

“The laudable purpose of saving lives does not justify the donation of an organ whose removal could cause the death of a donor,” said Jim Hughes, National President of Campaign Life Coalition (CLC). Harvesting organs only five minutes after the heart stops is just plain frightening. There are cases of people whose hearts have re-started after a longer period of time,” he said.

“These situations put the physician in the difficult decision-making position. They must choose between the care of their patient and the possibility of passing on the patient’s organs to someone else,” said Mary Ellen Douglas, CLC National Organizer. “The code of the physician is to do no harm and a heart-wrenching decision between two patients places the physician in the role of playing God.”

Background:

The Trillium Gift of Life Network, the Ontario agency in charge of organ and tissue donations, made an announcement at a media conference in Ottawa today regarding their new organ donation method. They are following the American plan developed in 1993 in Pittsburg, Penn., which purported to allow patients or their surrogates to offer organs for donation even though their patients were not brain dead (The criteria of “brain death” varies considerably with as many as 30 different models). The Pittsburg protocol said that if a patient was declared to have suffered irreversible loss of circulatory and respiratory function, that patient is “brain dead”. The candidate for organ retrieval would need to be young, free from hypertension, sepsis or cancer and be a non-drug user and HIV negative. Discussion between the physicians responsible for the care of the patient and transplant doctors would take place before withdrawal of ventilation. The ventilator would be withdrawn and the physicians would then wait for the heart to stop beating. In some cases blood thinners and vessel dilators are given to reserve the organs and harvesting begins. This model was presented at the media conference to be accepted in Ontario.

Media Contacts

Mary Ellen Douglas, CLC National Organizer, Kingston, ON 613-389-44732
Aidan Reid, Director, CLC public Affairs Office Ottawa 613-729-0379
Elena Repka, CLC Toronto Office 416-204-9749

Fighting for Truth and Justice
Campaign Life Coalition represents 100,000 families across Canada