



# **Tissue Legislation** **Consultation Submission**

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With the Human Tissue Bill in its initial stages, it is an ideal time to discuss how the current system can be improved. The audit on organ donation showed that fifty five percent of families did not know if the potential donor wanted to give the gift of donation. Raising public awareness is a key issue in increasing donation rates. A crucial step is to get a head start on building a database. Steps to a successful increase in organ donation include heightened public awareness, followed by improved procedures in hospitals.

**Public Awareness:**

- I would propose to include a tick box in the medical information section of all driving license forms.
- I would also propose that this tick box be included on all motor tax renewal forms.
- The information from those who have opted to become organ donors can be stored in the National Vehicle and Drivers File, Department of Transport, Shannon, Co. Clare.
- In the future this information can be accessed by hospitals nationwide, so that families can be aware of their loved ones' wishes.
- This is a simple and effective first step towards establishing a database of donors in Ireland.
- I would also propose that this tick box or organ donation symbol be included on all government issued identification cards, which would encompass age identification cards, government official ids, passports, student cards, and employee cards.
- Further, I would suggest that this tick box be included on all bank cards, from ATM cards to VISA cards, credit cards, etc... in order to heighten awareness, seeing as more people in Ireland use their bank cards on a regular basis than identification such as their license registration.

- In addition, I suggest the creation of an Organ Donation Awareness Trust Fund akin to Pennsylvania Act 102, (Appendix I) in which a special fund would be established for increasing public knowledge regarding organ donation.

### **Mandatory Reporting:**

- In order to institute a cohesive and efficient organ donation system, there must be a system of communication established for both the public and for doctors in hospitals.
- We propose a version of the Pennsylvania Act 102 (1994) (Appendix II), that mandates all hospitals to report all potential donors. This policy has proven to be extremely effective.
- The effectiveness of this law was increased by an educational programme where during the first 18 months of the law, more than 1,800 educational meetings were held on the subject of mandatory reporting in 130 hospitals.
- Between the introduction of Pennsylvania Act 102 in 1995 and 1999, organ donation increased by 59 % from 208 to 331 per year and organ transplants increased by 63 % from 606 to 1,005 per year in Pennsylvania.
- I propose to set up a similar system in Ireland based on Pennsylvania Act 102, in which a system of mandatory reporting and education of doctors is established in all hospitals in Ireland.
- This act would mandate that all hospitals must refer all deaths and imminent deaths to their local OPO for determination of suitability for organ donation and would be followed by an intensive education program for hospitals.
- I suggest as well that we take into account the issue of required request, and establish a system that would require that a person's wishes must be determined before death, and in accordance with the United States

Uniform Anatomical Gift Act (1987) (Appendix II), that families of potential organ donors are made conscious of the option of organ or tissue donation.

### **Human Tissue & Organ Donation Bills**

There is an urgent need for legislation at this moment regarding organ donation in Ireland and a demand for increased public awareness. Currently, legislation regarding organ donation and tissue donation are grouped together, however, in splitting the two; problems arise in whether one proposal will move through with much more urgency while the other remains stagnant for possibly years. The challenge is to weigh the down side of grouping the two issues in the same piece of legislation against the benefits of enacting the bill as soon as possible.

### **Use of funds of Trust Funds**

From information supplied by the Irish Blood transfusion Board, the higher blood donor ratio in rural areas would encourage focusing in that population sector.

Local radio would be used as the chief medium of promoting organ donation. A rolling and altering campaign would be sustained over a 3 to 5 year period. It would be rolling in that:

- It would run for 4 weeks on adjacent and adjoining local radio stations. This would mean that the campaign would run on Radio Kerry for 4 weeks, then Cork's County Sound for the next 4 weeks and then back to Radio Kerry for the next 4 weeks and so on.

The Campaign would also alternate between urging people to be donors and using testimony to urge people to tell their loved one of their wish to be a donor.

Appendix:

I. Pennsylvania Act 102, Chapter 86 Line 10

<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/CFDOCS/Legis/PN/Public/btCheck.cfm?txtType=PDF&sessYr=1993&sessInd=0&billBody=S&billTyp=B&billNbr=1662&pn=2566>

II. United States Uniform Anatomical Gift Act (1987)

<http://www.law.upenn.edu/bll/archives/ulc/fnact99/uaga87.pdf>