

Paramedic Services - Trillium Gift of Life Referral Program

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Report Summary

This report and presentation provides information regarding the Paramedic Services Trillium Gift of Life Referral Program.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP)

This report refers to operational matters and has no direct connection to the Community Energy and Emissions Plan.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Background

Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN), part of Ontario Health, is responsible for delivering and coordinating organ and tissue donation and transplantation services across the province of Ontario. TGLN is currently working with Paramedic Services in the province of Ontario implementing paramedic referral programs for qualifying patients following sudden death. This report and presentation aims to describe this referral program and how Greater Sudbury Paramedic Services assists TGLN in fulfilling their mission in saving and enhancing lives through the gift of organ and tissue donation and transplantation for consenting families.

Goals of Supporting Patients Wishes

The previous role of Paramedic Services was to transport all patients to the hospital. With the implementation of Field Pronouncements of Death by Paramedics and Base Hospital Physicians, patients who suffer a sudden death or devastating injury out of hospital may not be transported to a hospital. An out of hospital Field Pronouncement of Death may indirectly prevent one's wishes to donate. This referral program will help to ensure despite an out of hospital death, organ and tissue donation may still be possible and allow paramedics and patient's families to follow their loved one's wishes.

Paramedic Referral After Sudden Death

The pronouncement of death outside of a hospital occurs each day in the province of Ontario. The reason this donation referral program is important is that out of hospital deaths historically did not trigger donation screening and one's wishes to donate may be unknown to family or next of kin. TGLN has exclusive access to OHIP databases for those who are registered donors and this program will help prevent missed donations and support consenting families.

The Chain of Donation

The chain of donation includes responsibilities of paramedics, TGLN, tissue banks, and surgeons. The three steps to a paramedic donation referral includes identifying potential donors, referring to TGLN, and connecting TGLN with a donor's next of kin.

Identify - Patients must meet donor referral eligibility of being less than seventy-six years of age, last seen alive or death having occurred within 12 hours and no suspicion of IV drug use.

Refer – Connects with TGLN via telephone or provides next of kin with TGLN contact information.

Connect – Collection of health card and next of kin contact information is shared with TGLN. TGLN approaches next of kin, coroner, and if eligible, tissue recovery is coordinated.

The role of the paramedic would be to connect with TGLN and provide all necessary patient information and/or connect TGLN with the prospective donor's family. TGLN would complete the rest of the screening and donation process.

Ontario Tissue Supply vs Need

Currently over 1,500 citizens in Ontario are waiting for organ transplant and countless others could benefit from tissue donation. Ontario spends over \$13 million per year on imported tissue to supply the need for tissue transplantation¹. A variety of organs and tissues can successfully be harvested up to twenty four (24) hours after death and one tissue donor has the potential to save and enhance up to 75 lives.

The *Gift of Life Act* provides TGLN the authority to collect and use personal information for the purposes of donation. The *Gift of Life Act* also requires designated facilities to disclose personal health information, however with Paramedic Services outside of that law, we have completed a data sharing agreement to supplement privacy requirements.

Conclusion

With just two small simple steps of referring all out of hospital deaths that meet TGLN criteria and providing them with information specific to the patient including the contact information of their next of kin, 218 donors were referred in the first two years of the TGLN paramedic referral program. Greater Sudbury Paramedic Services commenced their paramedic donation referral program in May of this year with no reported donations to date, however our paramedics look forward to all of the opportunities in matching those who can give, to those in need.

Resources Cited

1. [Tissue banking in the Province of Ontario: Review and Analysis, 2014](#)