

REFERRAL & HOTLINE (1-888-543-3287)

Referring a vented patient is the most critical piece of the organ donation process.

The RN or designee is required to call the donor referral hotline at **1-888-543-3287** within 60 minutes of every ventilated patient meeting either of the referral triggers below:

- An anticipated discussion regarding end of life
- The patient has experienced a loss of three or more brainstem reflexes, regardless of sedation

All patients should be referred, regardless of their reason for admission, age, past medical history, presumed suitability or presumed beliefs. A timely referral not only complies with CMS¹, Joint Commission, DMV and hospital policy—it promises that:

Every patient/family has the right to...

- Choose to become a donor, if possible (autonomy)
- Know their donation options and make donation decisions

Donation can add meaning to death and bring comfort to bereaved families.²

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A REFERRAL?

LifeCenter Northwest will start determining suitability for organ donation. If the patient isn't ruled out:

Continue patient management and do not initiate comfort care or extubate until LifeCenter is able to determine suitability and meet with the family.

- Call LifeCenter if: There's a conference planned, the family expresses wishes to de-escalate care, there's brain death testing, the patient's status changes (DNR, neuro decline, hemodynamic instability), or if anyone brings up donation.
- Please do not mention donation to the family. It will never be the responsibility of the hospital staff to speak with the family about donation. **Hospital policy requires LifeCenter staff are the first to introduce the subject of donation to the family after a plan has been made with the care team and suitability is confirmed.** LifeCenter will seek out the guidance of the care team to ensure a compassionate, well-timed conversation with the family. If family brings up donation or asks about next steps, here are some examples of transitional language:
 - "There's someone here to talk with you about the next steps here at the hospital."
 - "Some people are here to speak with you who work closely with the hospital in situations like this."
 - "I've just given you a lot of information, let's take a pause and I'll come back with some people who will support you through the next steps."
- When in doubt, call LifeCenter (24/7) at **1-888-543-3287** for consultation and on-site support.

COMPASSIONATE FAMILY CARE IS LIFECENTER'S MAIN FOCUS

Early referrals—coupled with effective communication—ensure that both the hospital and LifeCenter Northwest are positioned to offer the most compassionate end-of-life care to patients and their families.

- Referring a patient to LifeCenter never means that a hospital is any less focused on providing quality, life-sustaining care. Nor does it mean LifeCenter will be involved in patient care inappropriately.
- If referred patients are not be suitable, LifeCenter will inform the care team so they can move on with the care plan. If the patient is deemed medically suitable for donation, having plenty of time to develop a plan and consider next steps with the family is vital.
- All families should have the opportunity to make an informed decision on organ donation. Please keep this option open.

¹ CMS 42 CFR 482.45 - Condition of participation: Organ, tissue, and eye procurement

² Willis D, Draper H (2012) To make the unusual usual: Is there an imperative to discuss organ donation with palliative care patients? International Journal of Palliative Nursing 18(1)