

Organ donor card

Drivers' licenses this year let the dead aid the living

... that someone else may live."

That is the title of a new brochure being distributed by the provincial Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Transportation and Communications to explain to the public the significance and importance of the organ donor cards attached to Ontario Drivers' licences starting in 1976.

Similar forms are also being attached for the first time to drivers' licences issued by the Government of Quebec this year.

The basic idea is simple.

No further need
Once you are dead, an individual has no further need for the vital organs of his or her body.

But if these organs are transplanted in time, someone who is currently ill may be able to lead a full and productive life again if one or more organs are implanted into his or her body.

This process has been used for years by the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) involving corneal transplants from the bodies of dead persons, and, for example, 352 blind Ontario residents in 1975 were able to see again thanks to transplants of the cornea—the transparent part of the outer coat of the eyeball.

According to CNIB officials in Toronto, 65 blind persons are at present awaiting corneal transplants.

Time limit
A CNIB spokesman said doctors have between one and eight hours maximum to remove the eyes from the body of a person following death, and then a further 48 hours within which to implant the cornea into the eyes of an awaiting person.

This program began in 1956 with the creation of the Eye Bank of Canada, operated jointly in Ontario by the CNIB and the University of

Toronto's department of ophthalmology.

Since then, thousands of Canadians have begun carrying Eye Bank cards which indicate that their eyes may be removed after death to permit corneal transplants.

Not cure-all for blind
The CNIB notes, however, that corneal transplants can only restore the vision of a person who has lost his sight if the sole cause of blindness was damage to the cornea—described as "the clear window in front of the eye."

The new organ donor cards attached to Ontario drivers' licences have a two-fold purpose then. One, they are designed to permit other parts of the dead body to be used for transplant purposes, and, two, they speed up the process.

For example, although a person who may have been killed in a car accident has an Eye Bank card signed by himself in his or her wallet, hospital authorities are legally bound to have a relative sign a form before that person's eyes may be removed.

And hospital administrators say that can

often take precious time, and the cornea of the eye of a dead person has an absolute eight-hour time limit to its use. The new program is to make more organs available faster.

Individual decision
The new forms attached to the drivers' licences do away with the need for contacting relatives, however, and if the signature on the form matches the signature on the attached drivers' licence, hospital officials are free to begin work.

The new form, made possible by the Ontario Human Tissue Gift Act of 1971, is attached to the base of the driver's licence.

On the left hand side, it reads: "if you wish to donate your body or part of your body for transplant or other humanitarian purposes, after death, please complete the form to the right and leave attached to the licence."

"If you do not wish to be a donor, please detach and destroy the consent form."

On the right side, under the heading "Consent Under The Human Tissue Gift Act, 1971," it reads "I, _____, having attained the age of 18 years, consent to the use after my death of:

The potential donor now has a choice between two blocks which may be checked off.

The first says "My body, or," while the second block says "the following specified parts of my body, namely," and a space is provided where the donor may list organs to be donated.

Purposes selected too
Below this it reads "for transplant and other therapeutic purposes — medical, education — scientific research."

Potential donors are then warned to "strike out purposes that are not in accord-

ance with your wishes."

So a donor may decide to check off "the following specified parts of my body, namely and list, for example, the heart, eyes and kidneys, and then specify that they are to be used only for "transplant and other therapeutic purposes."

Student research
By comparison, a person who signed over his or her entire body without striking out any particular uses, might have the body used initially for transplant purposes, and later for medical research purposes by students.

There is a space where the donor signs the form and lists the date.

All Ontario residents renewing their drivers' licences in 1976 are receiving the attached forms, and it should be noted that husbands and wives should discuss the situation among themselves.

Spouse has no say
For under provincial law, if a husband has signed away his entire body for transplant or medical research purposes and is killed in a car accident or falls dead on Main St., the body is legally lost to the widow who might want a formal burial service.

The coroner or, in some cases, the policeman on the scene would order the body taken to the hospital to undergo whatever the victim approved on his licence, and the widow would have no legal recourse.

Law strict
Indeed, Doug Enright, Media Relations Officer for the Ministry of Health, said in a telephone interview from his Toronto office last week that the Human Tissue Gift Act of 1971 is very specific when it comes to the legal worries of hospital administrators or the indignation of spouses or other relatives.



THE GRADE 6 CHOIR at Georgetown and District Christian School came first in the Hamilton Kiwanis Music festival, held at McMaster University, April 26. With choir director Miss M. Groat, the choir members are Robert Adema, Michael Banks, Jenny Blekkenhorst, Dorothy Borg, Penny Bydevaate, Carolyn De Kleer, George De Kleer, Debbie De Long, Paul Durand, Kerry Gallagher, Sonya Kroes, Barb

Kuiken, Joan Kuiperij, Henrietta Lamberink, Sidney Looyenga, Mark Postman, Margaret Roffel, Jennifer Schenk, Sandy Schriber, Frances Struetker, Donnie Van Dyke, Hilda Von Spronson, Anthony Van Heiden, John Berhey, Debbie Walraven. Some of them are from Acton and district.

Mr. Enright said that "the signature of anyone 18 years of age or over on an organ donor card is all that's needed to make consent of post-mortem donations legal."

And he said persons who do not want to participate in this program may simply tear off that section of their drivers' licences and throw them away.

Equipment sold for \$3,971.70

Halton Hills works committee learned Monday night that the sale of several pieces of surplus works equipment including two tractors and four trucks added \$3,971.70 to town coffers.

At the same meeting it was revealed the town will now try to sell two sand spreaders and a big rolling machine.

Bulk garbage pick up June 3

June 3 will be the day Halton Hills works department holds its bulk garbage pick up works committee announced Monday.

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New rules

Ambulances serve living, not dead

Spokesman for both the Halton Regional Police and the Milton detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police report no new instructions have been issued to them with the inauguration in 1976 of drivers' licences with organ donor cards attached to them.

What usually happens, say, at a bad accident on Highway 401 near Campbellville, is that both the OPP and the ambulance from Halton and Mississauga Ambulance Service Ltd.—based at Milton District Hospital—reach the scene at the same time.

If the victim is simply injured, he or she is off to hospital.

Dead or alive
If the victim may or may not be dead, a medical doctor from Milton is taken to the scene to pronounce the person dead or live.

In extreme cases, however, when the victim is "obviously dead" (due to decapitation, for example) the OPP officer may contact the coroner in Milton, advise him of the sit-

uation, and the coroner will stay at the hospital until the body arrives.

But at the scene, if the doctor or officer certifies that the victim is dead, the ambulance is freed to return to its post while a morgue station wagon is summoned from the closest funeral home.

New laws
Prior to 1975, though, many ambulances would in such an instance return the remains of the body to the hospital or morgue.

But the Ontario Government in 1975 passed amendments to the Ambulance Act to ensure such vehicles were on call to save the living—rather than transport the dead.

Under the new rules, ambulance attendants may only legally remove the remains of a person declared dead by a physician from a public place, if a removal (funeral home) service is not readily available, and if a back-up ambulance is ready and waiting nearby.

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