

**To the members of The Standing Committee on Human Services:**

**I am pleased to see our government is attempting to address the extremely low rate of Organ Donation in Saskatchewan and am grateful for the opportunity to share my thoughts.**

**I have had the opportunity to discuss this situation with members of the medical community and Saskatchewan's Transplant Coordinator. I also contacted the Nova Scotia Minister of Health's office to discuss their initiatives around the concept of an opt out policy toward organ donation.**

**In my opinion there are several things that can be done to improve our rates of organ donation, which have been very low for several years. As I was preparing this document on September 9, 2016. I found a report that was just released dealing with Organ Donation in Canada ([https://www.blood.ca/sites/default/files/ODT\\_Report.pdf](https://www.blood.ca/sites/default/files/ODT_Report.pdf)). It contains the 2015 statistics for organ donation in Canada and shows a decrease in the rates for Saskatchewan.**

**Saskatchewan**

Saskatchewan's deceased donation rates increased modestly in 2014 and 2015. The province has yet to introduce three of the most important system improvements: mandatory referral, DCD and donation specialists. This fact may be limiting the province's potential to increase deceased donations.

**DCD (Donation after circulatory death)**

**The report identifies what it's authors perceived as factors responsible for low donation rates in Saskatchewan and lists what they see as best practices both nationally and internationally.**

**I believe that the major piece we are missing is education! This education needs to take place at two levels, the general public, and the medical community.**

- **A major advertising campaign is required to draw awareness to the need for organ donation. Radio and Television Public Service Announcements, Social Media, Posters and Billboards could all be used in a media blitz. Knowledge about the need for, and importance for, organ donation could be given in the same way we are made aware of the dangers of drinking and driving.**
- **Our medical community need to be educated about the need for Organ Donation, and the resources available to them. According to our Provincial Transplant coordinator their staff are able to come and speak to the families of referred donors. My physician, for one, was unaware of this resource. The availability of donation specialists in ER's and ICU's would play a major role in this education process for families and physicians.**

**There is certainly room for other changes to our system as well.**

- **We could investigate an opt out process. This would at the very least generate a greatly need discussion and awareness of organ donation.**
- **We could create a registry of Organ Donors by linking the status to our electronic health record system, rather than a sticker on our Health Card. This could be done via mail out, online registration, or a combination of the two.**

**As a society we face a situation where the resources that could be used to save lives are being discarded. This needs to change. It is heartbreaking to see the scene of a fatal automobile accident and realize that every effort will be made to save every part that is salvageable from the vehicles, and that lifesaving organ and tissues will more often than not be buried or cremated.**

**Thank you for the opportunity to express my views on this extremely critical topic.**

**Robert Pannell**