

Opt Out system in BC

BC Transplant regularly reviews best practices in the area of organ donation and transplantation as part of an ongoing effort to improve donation rates within the province. Similar to other jurisdictions in Canada and other countries, such as the United Kingdom and United States, BC Transplant has looked at presumed consent legislation as a possible measure for increasing donation rates.

In a presumed consent model, every person at time of death is considered for organ donation unless they have specifically registered to not donate.

At this time BC is not pursuing presumed consent legislation for a number of reasons including:

- No evidence to suggest presumed consent legislation directly results in higher rates of organ donation. Many countries, such as Spain, that currently have presumed consent laws do not enforce them and the decision to donate ultimately rests with the families of the deceased.
- Donation leaders and practitioners in countries with presumed consent attribute their higher donation rates to a systems approach of supporting donation and not to presumed consent legislation.
- Research suggests that other strategies such as in-hospital donation coordinators, education and training for medical professionals, and public education are more effective at increasing donor rates than presumed consent legislation. BC Transplant has implemented these strategies and is seeing great success.
- BCT, and the Organ Donation Organizations across Canada, believe presumed consent would result in fewer donation referrals from critical care staff and turn the altruistic act of organ donation into a government mandated requirement.

Over the last six years BC Transplant has implemented a number of changes within the province, aimed at increasing donation rates:

- Establishment of regional hospital-based critical care teams of physicians and donation coordinators who work collaboratively with health authorities to support organ donation at the hospital level.
- The expansion of donation options at hospitals outside of the Lower Mainland to include donation after cardiac death.
- Leadership of education and awareness initiatives, including Canada's first ever 48 hour national drive for organ donor registration.
- Partnerships aimed at making it easier for British Columbians to register their support for organ donation – Service BC, ICBC, London Drugs.

These changes have resulted in the following achievements:

- A significant increase in donor rates – 20 deceased donors per million in BC in 2015, up from 7.2 donors per million in 2009.
- The highest living kidney donor rate in the Canada at 24 donors per million population in 2015.
- A record number of 422 transplants in BC in 2015 – thanks to the gift of life from 95 deceased donors and 113 living donors.