

TOP 10 TIPS FOR REPORTING ON ORGAN DONATION

1. In language, tone and images used, be mindful and respectful. The Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) Code of Ethics calls on reporters to *"Do No Harm"* by treating all story subjects as human beings deserving of respect and compassion. In accordance with this principle, we recommend against using imagery of operating rooms and surgical procedures as well as words like *"cadaver"* and phrases such as *"pull the plug."*
2. **Don't use the stigmatizing or offensive words *"harvest"* or *"harvesting;"* instead, use *"recover"* or *"organ recovery."***
3. Refrain from using *"life-support"* in a story about donation. Because organ donation only occurs after all life-saving efforts have been exhausted, the proper term is *"ventilated"* or *"artificial"* support.
4. Organ donation is a rare and generous event. When a story on organ donation does not include a call to action to register as a donor or a mention of each donor's generous gift, the public is left with an overly simplistic understanding of organ donation.
5. **Always conclude a donation/transplantation-related story with an opportunity for viewers, listeners and readers to register as an organ donor: *"To register as an organ donor, please visit registerme.org/core or check the box at your next trip to the DMV."***
6. Most transplants don't happen without the generosity of a donor and a donor family who, amidst their grief, made the choice to give the gift of life. When reporting a story focused on an organ recipient, take the opportunity to honor the gift given: *"This story is possible because of the generosity of an organ donor."*
7. Recognize the media's role as the most visible source of organ donation information in the country and the responsibility that comes with your role. Actively share the hopeful message that organ donation saves lives and refrain from perpetuating myths that would keep people from registering as organ donors.
8. Rely only on donation and transplant professionals to provide technical details about donation and transplantation. A life-threatening injury or illness can be overwhelming for a family and the process of organ procurement is complex. It is not uncommon during these highly stressful times for family members of donors or recipients to not fully understand the many unfamiliar and complicated conversations, terminology and activities taking place in the hospital.
9. HIPAA laws require hospitals and CORE to obtain patients' expressed permission before releasing any information to media. Although we welcome stories that highlight donation's truest heroes, donors and their families, please understand that we have a duty to transplant recipients and donor families, who may find media attention intrusive and compounding of their grief. Also, the Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA) recommends that journalists ask themselves, *"Does the public have a justifiable need to know or is this matter just one where some want to know?"* as they balance this public need to know with an individual's right to HIPAA privacy.
10. Stories with sensationalized or inaccurate information are damaging to the public trust, to those awaiting transplantation, and to the honor of donors and donor families who have given the gift of life. If ever in doubt, contact media@core.org for more information or to talk to an expert.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE



CENTER FOR ORGAN RECOVERY & EDUCATION (CORE)

CORE is one of 57 federally designated not-for-profit organ procurement organizations (OPOs) in the United States, serving nearly five million people in western Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Chemung County, New York. CORE coordinates the recovery and matching of organs, tissues and corneas for transplant within our service region, and works tirelessly to create a culture of donation within the hospitals and communities we serve. CORE's mission is to **Save** and **Heal** lives through donation, ultimately ending the deaths of those on the transplant waiting list, while maintaining integrity for the donation process, dignity for the donors, and compassion for their families. For more information, visit www.core.org or call 1-800-DONORS-7 or 1-800-366-6777.

Contact Information

204 Sigma Drive, RIDC Park
Pittsburgh, PA 15238

p: 1-800-DONORS-7 or 1-800-366-6777

Media Inquiries

Katelynn Metz

p: 412-963-3550

m: 202-309-5116 (if on deadline)

e: kmetz@core.org/media@core.org

TRANSPLANT CENTERS

Each of the more than 150 hospitals and health care facilities in CORE's service area act as referral sites for potential donors. Seven of the hospitals also perform organ transplants:

- Allegheny General Hospital
- Charleston Area Medical Center
- UPMC Children's Hospital
- UPMC Hamot
- UPMC Presbyterian
- VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System
- WVU Ruby Memorial Hospital