

Financial Incentives for Organ Donation

The American Nephrology Nurses Association (ANNA) and members of the transplant community are unable to know with certainty if financial incentives will increase the number of donors or if such incentives will act as a deterrent to donation.

It is the position of ANNA that:

- ANNA endorses the recommendation of the Institute of Medicine that financial incentives to increase the supply of organs from deceased individuals should not be promoted at this time (Childress & Liverman, 2006).
- Research regarding financial incentives may provide important insight as to whether financial incentives increase donations or deter donation.
- ANNA endorses well-designed research studies on best practices in the recovery and allocation of organs which may include offering financial incentives for donation and covering medical costs incurred by living related donors.

Background and Rationale

The number of patients on waiting lists for organ transplants continues to grow every year while the number of deceased donors has increased at a much slower rate. This is in spite of several initiatives including expanded criteria deceased donors (utilized through 2014) and a National Ad Council campaign to increase public awareness of the need for organ donation. The rate of living donor transplants has not alleviated the shortage of organs, and several thousand patients die each year while on the waiting list. The impact of offering incentives for organ donation has not been explored.

The National Organ Transplant Act (NOTA) enacted in 1984 clearly bans financial compensation for organ donation. This prohibition was initially established to prevent brokerage of kidneys from living donors. The medical professionals in the transplant community and the thousands of persons awaiting organ transplant continue to depend on the altruism of donors and their family members. As the organ shortage grows more severe, some leaders in the transplant and academic communities have suggested that altruism alone is not meeting the need and that financial incentives may increase the number of organs available and assist in alleviating the organ shortage.

References

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