

BODY DONATION

Individuals considering whole body donation are advised to make arrangements in advance with the medical school of their choice. Organ donors cannot be whole body donors also except for eye donors.

North Carolina law is flexible about anatomical donation, or bequeathal, of one's body for the purpose of medical study and research. This can be done by a statement on the driver's license. However, filing a Bequeathal or Donation Certificate with a medical school is the preferred practice. Forms for this purpose are available from each of the North Carolina medical schools listed below.

Using a will to make statements about body bequeathal is possible, but that document may not be readily available at the time and place of death and may not be read immediately in any case. If using a will this way make sure a copy of the will is available to whoever is responsible for disposition of the body.

Schools of medicine do not always have a need for human bodies for anatomical studies and may refuse to accept a donation Therefore alternative arrangements should be specified.

The donation certificate references the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act of the N.C. Statutes, has places to indicate preferences in case one dies at a location distant from the chosen medical school, and preferences regarding disposition of ashes following use of the body. The donor and two witnesses sign the form. One copy is sent to the medical school at the time it is signed, the donor keeps a copy with other important papers relating to the end of life.

These anatomical programs may provide a form for supplementary information about the donor. Such information, a social and medical history, includes social security number, marital status, birth place and date, occupation, parents names, education, and attending physician.

It is best to let family and relatives know of your wish to donate your body so that surprises may be avoided rather than lead to objections that complicate arrangements.

Bequeathal does not preclude a memorial or funeral service. But if a service with the body present is wanted, the funeral director should contact the receiving school or agency before preparing the body. The family is financially responsible for transporting the body to the medical school.

Listed below are the relevant North Carolina Departments of Anatomy that should be contacted. No medical schools in the United States are permitted by law to purchase bodies from families or estates. Physical condition of the body and not age is the important factor in body donation.

Wake Forest University School of Medicine

Department of Neurobiology and Anatomy
Medical Center Boulevard
Winston-Salem, NC 27157-1010
(336) 716-4369

East Carolina School of Medicine

Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology
600 Moyer Boulevard
Greenville, NC 27858-4354
(252) 816-2849

University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill School of Medicine

Department of Anatomy
Medical Science Teaching Laboratory
Body Donation Program
314 Berry Hill Hall
Campus Box #7520
Chapel Hill, NC 27599
(919) 966-1134

Duke Anatomical Gift Program

Box 3170
Duke University Medical Center
Durham, NC 27710
(919) 684-4124

§ 130A-412.11 Who may make an anatomical gift of decedent's body or body part.

(a) Subject to subsections (b) and (c) of this section, and unless barred by G.S. 130A-412.9 or G.S. 130A-412.10, an anatomical gift of a decedent's body or body part for purpose of transplantation, therapy, research, or education may be made by any member of the following classes of persons who is reasonably available, in the order of priority listed:

(1) An agent of the decedent at the time of death who could have made an anatomical gift under G.S. 130A-412.6(2) immediately before the decedent's death;

(2) The spouse of the decedent;

(3) Adult children of the decedent;

(4) Parents of the decedent;

(5) Adult siblings of the decedent;

(6) Adult grandchildren of the decedent;

(7) Grandparents of the decedent;

(8) An adult who exhibited special care and concern for the decedent;

(9) The persons who were acting as the guardians of the person of the decedent at the time of death; and

(10) Any other person having the authority to dispose of the decedent's body.

(b) If there is more than one member of a class listed in subdivision (a)(1), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), or (9) of this section entitled to make an anatomical gift, an anatomical gift may be made by a member of the class unless that member or a person to which the gift may pass under G.S. 130A-412.13 knows of an objection by another member of the class. If an objection is known, the gift may be made only by a majority of the members of the class who are reasonably available.

(c) A person may not make an anatomical gift if, at the time of the decedent's death, a person in a prior class under subsection (a) of this section is reasonably available to make or to object to the making of an anatomical gift. (2007-538, s. 1.)

§ 130A-412.12 Manner of making, amending, or revoking anatomical gift of decedent's body or body part.

(a) A person authorized to make an anatomical gift under G.S. 130A-412.11 may make an anatomical gift by a document of gift signed by the person making the gift or by that person's oral communication that is electronically recorded or is contemporaneously reduced to a record and signed by the individual receiving the oral communication.

(b) Subject to subsection (c) of this section, an anatomical gift by a person authorized under G.S. 130A-412.11 may be amended or revoked orally or in a record by any member of a prior class who is reasonably available. If more than one member of the prior class is reasonably available, the gift made by a person authorized under G.S. 130A-412.11 may be:

(1) Amended only if a majority of the reasonably available members agrees to the amending of the gift; or

(2) Revoked only if a majority of the reasonably available members agrees to the revoking of the gift or if they are equally divided as to whether to revoke the gift.

(c) A revocation under subsection (b) of this section is effective only if, before an incision has been made to remove a body part from the donor's body or before invasive procedures have begun to prepare the recipient, the procurement organization, transplant hospital, or physician or technician knows of the revocation. (2007-538, s. 1.)

§ 130A-412.13 Persons that may receive anatomical gift; purpose of anatomical gift.

(a) An anatomical gift may be made to the following persons named in the document of gift:

(1) A hospital; accredited medical school, dental school, college, or university; organ procurement organization; or other appropriate person, including the Commission on Anatomy, for research or education;

(2) Subject to subsection (b) of this section, an individual designated by the person making the anatomical gift if the individual is the recipient of the body part;

(3) An eye bank or tissue bank.

(b) If an anatomical gift to an individual under subdivision (a)(2) of this section cannot be transplanted into the individual, the body part passes in accordance with subsection (g) of this section in the absence of an express, contrary indication by the person making the anatomical gift.

(c) If an anatomical gift of one or more specific body parts or of all body parts is made in a document of gift that does not name a person described in subsection (a) of this

section but identifies the purpose for which an anatomical gift may be used, the following rules apply:

(1) If the body part is an eye and the gift is for the purpose of transplantation or therapy, the gift passes to the appropriate eye bank.

(2) If the body part is tissue and the gift is for the purpose of transplantation or therapy, the gift passes to the appropriate tissue bank.

(3) If the body part is an organ and the gift is for the purpose of transplantation or therapy, the gift passes to the appropriate organ procurement organization as custodian of the organ.

(4) If the body part is an organ, an eye, or tissue and the gift is for the purpose of research or education, the gift passes to the appropriate procurement organization.

(d) For the purpose of subsection (c) of this section, if there is more than one purpose of an anatomical gift set forth in the document of gift but the purposes are not set forth in any priority, the gift must be used for transplantation or therapy, if suitable. If the gift cannot be used for transplantation or therapy, the gift may be used for research or education.

(e) If an anatomical gift of one or more specific body parts is made in a document of gift that does not name a person described in subsection (a) of this section and does not identify the purpose of the gift, the gift may be used only for transplantation or therapy, and the gift passes in accordance with subsection (g) of this section.

(f) If a document of gift specifies only a general intent to make an anatomical gift by words such as "donor," "organ donor," or "body donor," or by a symbol or statement of similar import, the gift may be used only for transplantation or therapy, and the gift passes in accordance with subsection (g) of this section.

(g) For purposes of subsections (b), (e), and (f) of this section, the following rules apply:

(1) If the body part is an eye, the gift passes to the appropriate eye bank.

(2) If the body part is tissue, the gift passes to the appropriate tissue bank.

(3) If the body part is an organ, the gift passes to the appropriate organ procurement organization as custodian of the organ.

(h) An anatomical gift of an organ for transplantation or therapy, other than an anatomical gift under subdivision (a)(2) of this section, passes to the organ procurement organization as custodian of the organ.

(i) If an anatomical gift does not pass pursuant to subsections (a) through (h) of this section or the decedent's body or body part is not used for transplantation, therapy, research, or education, then custody of the body or body part passes to the person under obligation to dispose of the body or body part.

(j) A person may not accept an anatomical gift if the person knows that the gift was not effectively made under G.S. 130A-412.7 or G.S. 130A-412.12 or if the person knows that the decedent made a refusal under G.S. 130A-412.9 that was not revoked. For purposes of this subsection, if a person knows that an anatomical gift was made on a document of gift, the person is deemed to know of any amendment or revocation of the gift or any refusal to make an anatomical gift on the same document of gift.

(k) Except as otherwise provided in subdivision (a)(2) of this section, nothing in this act affects the allocation of organs for transplantation or therapy. (2007-538, s. 1.)

§ 130A-412.14 Search and notification.

(a) The following persons shall make a reasonable search of an individual who the person reasonably believes is dead or near death for a document of gift or other information identifying the individual as a donor or as an individual who made a refusal:

(1) A law enforcement officer, firefighter, paramedic, or other emergency rescuer finding the individual; and

(2) If no other source of the information is immediately available, a hospital, as soon as practical after the individual's arrival at the hospital.

(b) If a document of gift or a refusal to make an anatomical gift is located by the search required by subdivision (a)(1) of this section and the individual or deceased individual to whom it relates is taken to a hospital, the person responsible for conducting the search shall send the document of gift or refusal to the hospital.

(c) A person is not subject to criminal or civil liability for failing to discharge the duties imposed by this section but may be subject to administrative sanctions. (2007-538, s. 1.)

§ 130A-412.15 Delivery of document of gift not required; right to examine.

(a) A document of gift need not be delivered during the donor's lifetime to be effective.

(b) Upon or after an individual's death, a person in possession of a document of gift or a refusal to make an anatomical gift with respect to the individual shall allow examination and copying of the document of gift or refusal by a person authorized to make or object to the making of an anatomical gift with respect to the individual or by a person to which the gift could pass under G.S. 130A-412.13. (2007-538, s. 1.)

§ 130A-412.16 Rights and duties of procurement organization and others.

(a) When a hospital refers an individual at or near death to a procurement organization, the organization shall make a reasonable search of the records of the North Carolina Department of Transportation, Division of Motor Vehicles, and any donor registry that it knows exists for the geographical area in which the individual resides to ascertain whether the individual has made an anatomical gift.

(b) A procurement organization must be allowed reasonable access to information in the records of the North Carolina Department of Transportation, Division of Motor Vehicles, to ascertain whether an individual at or near death is a donor.

(c) When a hospital refers an individual at or near death to a procurement organization, the organization may conduct any reasonable examination necessary to ensure the medical suitability of a body part that is or could be the subject of an anatomical gift for transplantation, therapy, research, or education from a donor or a prospective donor. During the examination period, measures necessary to ensure the medical suitability of the body part may not be withdrawn unless the hospital or procurement organization knows that the individual expressed a contrary intent.

(d) Unless prohibited by law other than this Part, at any time after a donor's death, the person to which a body part passes under G.S. 130A-412.13 may conduct any reasonable examination necessary to ensure the medical suitability of the body or body part for its intended purpose.

(e) Unless otherwise prohibited by law, an examination under subsection (c) or (d) of this section may include an examination of all medical and dental records of the donor or prospective donor.

(f) Upon the death of a minor who was a donor or had signed a refusal, unless a procurement organization knows the minor is emancipated, the procurement organization shall conduct a reasonable search for the parents of the minor and provide the parents with an opportunity to revoke or amend the anatomical gift or revoke the refusal.

(g) Upon referral by a hospital under subsection (a) of this section, a procurement organization shall make a reasonable search for any person listed in G.S. 130A-412.11 having priority to make an anatomical gift on behalf of a prospective donor. If a procurement organization receives information that an anatomical gift to any other person was made, amended, or revoked, it shall promptly advise the other person of all relevant information.

(h) Subject to G.S. 130A-412.13(i) and G.S. 130A-412.25, the rights of the person to which a body part passes under G.S. 130A-412.13 are superior to the rights of all others with respect to the body part. The person may accept or reject an anatomical gift in whole or in part. Subject to the terms of the document of gift and this Part, a person that accepts an anatomical gift of an entire body may allow embalming, burial, or cremation, and use of remains in a funeral service. If the gift is of a body part, the person to which the body part passes under G.S. 130A-412.13, upon the death of the donor and before embalming, burial, or cremation, shall cause the body part to be removed without unnecessary mutilation.

(i) Neither the physician who attends the decedent at death nor the physician who determines the time of the decedent's death may participate in the procedures for removing or transplanting a part from the decedent.

(j) A physician or technician may remove a donated body part from the body of a donor that the physician or technician is qualified to remove. (2007-538, s. 1.)

§ 130A-412.18 Sale or purchase of body parts prohibited.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (b) of this section, a person, that for valuable consideration, knowingly purchases or sells a body part for transplantation or therapy if removal of a body part from an individual is intended to occur after the individual's death commits a Class H felony and upon conviction may be fined up to fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) for each offense.

(b) A person may charge a reasonable amount for the removal, processing, preservation, quality control, storage, transportation, implantation, or disposal of a body part. (2007-538, s. 1.)

§ 130A-412.20 Immunity.

(a) A person that acts with due care in accordance with this Part or with the applicable anatomical gift law of another state, or attempts in good faith to do so, is not liable for the act in a civil action, criminal prosecution, or administrative proceeding.

(b) Neither the person making an anatomical gift nor the donor's estate is liable for any injury or damage that results from the making or use of the gift.

(c) In determining whether an anatomical gift has been made, amended, or revoked under this Part, a person may rely upon representations of an individual listed in subdivisions (2) through (8) of G.S. 130A-412.11(a) relating to the individual's relationship to the donor or prospective donor unless the person knows that the representation is untrue. (2007-538, s. 1.)

§ 130A-412.21 Law governing validity; choice of law as to execution of document of gift; presumption of validity.

(a) A document of gift is valid if executed in accordance with:

(1) This Part;

(2) The laws of the state or country where it was executed; or

(3) The laws of the state or country where the person making the anatomical gift was domiciled, has a place of residence, or was a national at the time the document of gift was executed.

(b) If a document of gift is valid under this section, the law of this State governs the interpretation of the document of gift.

(c) A person may presume that a document of gift or amendment of an anatomical gift is valid unless that person knows that it was not validly executed or was revoked.
(2007-538, s. 1.)