

Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital Policy and Procedure		
Organ and Tissue Donation		
Effective: April 2014	Revised: December 2024	Due to Review: December 2026

POLICY

The Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital (VPCH) recognizes New England Organ Bank (NEOB) as the designated regional organ, tissue and eye donation agency and maintains a contract with this agency.

VPCH does not provide services to severely brain injured, ventilator dependent individuals meeting the defined criteria for imminent death. Neither does VPCH have an operating room or a morgue. Therefore, no organ donations will occur at VPCH.

DEFINITIONS

Person Facing Imminent Death: a severely brain injured, ventilator dependent person, with either clinical findings consistent with a Glasgow Coma Scale (GCS) of 5 or less, or a plan to discontinue mechanical or pharmacological support.

Timely Notification: (a) as soon as it is anticipated that a hospitalized person will meet the criteria for imminent death as defined herein; or (b) as soon as possible (within one hour) after a hospitalized person meets the criteria for imminent death as defined herein and prior to the withdrawal of any life sustaining therapies.

PROCEDURE

VPCH recognizes the right of every individual to determine the disposition of their organs and tissues upon death. When a hospitalized individual has not made their wishes known through a properly executed advanced directive or other document of gift, VPCH shall coordinate with NEOB as may be clinically relevant to discuss with families or other representatives of a potential donor the option to make or refuse to make an anatomical gift and encourage or request donations whenever feasible. VPCH staff and the donation agency shall exercise discretion and sensitivity for the circumstances, beliefs, and desires of the families of potential donors.

VPCH shall cooperate with the NEOB and local general hospitals, when necessary, to fulfill a hospitalized individual’s wish to be an organ, eye, and/or tissue donor when a valid advance directive or document of gift exists in accordance with state law.

Organ and Tissue Donation Information

An individual requesting information will receive organ and tissue donation information provided by the NEOB as soon as reasonably practicable following inquiry.

Imminent Death

Any hospitalized individual facing imminent death will be emergently transferred to the nearest and most appropriate acute care hospital for lifesaving and/or terminal care in accordance with VPCH policy. The receiving facility assumes responsibility upon transfer for this notification in accordance with their applicable policies. The policies and procedures of the receiving hospital relative to organ donation and procurement will govern post-transfer care and potential suitability for organ, tissue, and/or eye donation. VPCH medical staff may collaborate with the receiving facility as needed to facilitate timely notification to the NEOB of all hospitalized individuals facing imminent deaths by calling their 24-hour number, 1-800-446-6362.


Death of a hospitalized person at VPCH

The death of a hospitalized individual while at VPCH will be managed in accordance with VPCH policy and procedure for death, including as this relates to organ procurement and donation.

Education and Quality Assurance

VPCH will cooperate with required audits of deceased patients conducted by the NEOB staff to aid in their evaluation of our adherence to organ and tissue donation policy and procedure. When determined to be needed, VPCH will also work cooperatively with the NEOB to ensure that appropriate education on this topic is provided.

The VPCH will maintain an agreement or Memorandum of Understanding with NEOB that incorporates the requirements of this policy and of applicable law and regulation.

Approved by	Signature	Date
Emily Hawes, Commissioner, Vermont Department of Mental Health	 C50275615A62462...	12/5/2024