



**TRANSPLANT
QUÉBEC**

*Ensemble pour
le don d'organes,
pour la vie
depuis **50**ans*

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A NEW ORGAN DONATION LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK NEEDED TO SAVE MORE LIVES

Transplant Québec presents its recommendations to the parliamentary committee

Québec, Wednesday, January 31, 2024 — Appearing at the Assemblée nationale du Québec today as part of the initiative mandate to study ways to facilitate organ and tissue donation, Transplant Québec **reaffirms the significant need for Quebec to undertake a thorough social reflection towards a complete reform of the organ donation system.** "For Transplant Québec, it is clear that to save more lives, Québec must enact a specific and comprehensive law on organ donation and transplantation. This is what will make everything else possible," states Martine Bouchard, Executive Director for Transplant Québec.

With its unique and highly specialized expertise and over 50 years of experience, Transplant Québec presented parliamentarians with a memorandum outlining 12 recommendations (see *Appendix*), articulated around four axes of intervention: the **framework for donations**, including structure, processes, and levers; **healthcare professional training**; **respect of last will**; and **consent**.

Concretely, Transplant Québec recommends, among other things, strengthening the obligation for all hospitals to notify Transplant Québec as soon as possible upon the imminent or recent death of any person, improving and enhancing healthcare professional training, promoting respect for a donor's last wishes, enabling the population to express their consent (or refusal), and deploying additional awareness efforts among the Quebec population.

"The meeting of the committee being held today is a first step in the right direction. However, it is important that this leads to the necessary optimizations. For all these patients still awaiting an organ, for all the deceased donors and their families, we have a duty to do better because it is possible to do better," adds Martine Bouchard.

A unique organization to oversee organ donation in Québec

Although the process for organ donation is inherently complex, there is currently no organization that oversees the entire process of organ donation and transplantation. Therefore, Transplant Québec wishes for the new legislative framework to designate it as the unique responsible and accountable organization, and to grant it all the necessary levers to fully carry out its mission.

"In order for Québec to join the most efficient jurisdictions, it needs more than a subcontractor: it needs a managing body for organ donation and transplantation. This aligns directly with the experts' opinion that an authority must be clearly identified to ensure compliance with the provisions of the legislative framework," asserts Martine Bouchard, adding that all of Transplant Québec's recommendations are based on scientific literature, the most effective worldwide practices, and the input of recognized experts.

Social reflection on the form of consent

Regarding consent more specifically, Transplant Québec emphasizes that although changing the consent process is a means to attain improved outcomes, it is not the sole determining factor, nor is it the primary one. Experts agree that only the combination of several concrete measures will improve the situation. Transplant Québec would endorse pursuing presumed consent provided that acceptance of such a change by the population is demonstrated.

“At Transplant Québec, we are driven by the conviction that we not only have the power but also the collective responsibility to do all we can to save more lives. It is therefore with hope that we invite parliamentarians and the entire population to pursue this reflection so that we can adopt a legislative framework that will make Québec more efficient,” concludes the Executive Director of Transplant Québec.

About Transplant Québec

The Minister of Health and Social Services has mandated Transplant Québec to save lives and improve the health of persons in need of a transplant by coordinating the organ donation process, ensuring the equitable allocation of organs, supporting best clinical practices through consensus building and the mobilization of its partners, and promoting organ donation in society. Transplant Québec strives to ensure that as many Quebecers as possible who are waiting on an organ can receive a transplant in a timely manner.

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Source :

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Summary of Transplant Québec's recommendations

- 1) Québec must enact a specific and comprehensive legislative framework on organ donation and transplantation.
- 2) This law should provide for the official designation of Transplant Québec as the organization responsible for the entire organ donation and transplantation process and grant it the necessary levers to ensure compliance.
- 3) This law should provide mechanisms to guarantee adequate and sustainable funding to the designated organization, enabling it to fully fulfill its mission.
- 4) This law should affirm the obligation for the human, material, and financial resources necessary for the donation and transplantation processes to be available to healthcare professional teams.
- 5) Transplant Québec recommends that within the adoption of a comprehensive and specific law on organ donation and transplantation, Québec consider opting for presumed consent regarding organ donation, provided that the population's acceptance of such a change is demonstrated and that it integrates all aspects related to the organ donation and transplantation process that go beyond the sole question of consent in a coherent manner.
- 6) This law should provide for a single, user-friendly, and accessible online platform allowing the population to express their consent (or refusal).
- 7) Transplant Québec recommends that a specific and comprehensive law on organ donation and transplantation reinforce the obligation for all hospital establishments to notify Transplant Québec as soon as possible in the event of the imminent or recent death of any person.
- 8) This law should specify the reasons for not complying with a person's recorded last wishes before their death to promote respect for their last wishes and better support their loved ones.
- 9) Mandatory training on organ donation and transplantation should be provided for healthcare professionals already employed in the network as part of their continuing education obligations, in collaboration with their respective professional orders.
- 10) Mandatory content on the organ donation and transplantation process should be integrated into the initial training of future healthcare professionals, in collaboration with their respective professional orders.

- 11) Additional and recurring resources within the government or the designated organization should be dedicated to conducting awareness and promotional activities among the Québec population regarding organ donation, transplantation, and consent (or refusal).

- 12) Education on organ donation should be included in the Québec school curriculum, for example, through the *Citoyenneté et culture québécoise* course, to familiarize students with organ donation, its implications, and how to express their consent (or refusal).