The Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP
Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care

MEDIA RELEASE

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New guidelines for organ transplantation released

A record number of Australians benefited from receiving an organ transplant in 2015 with 1,241 Australians receiving a life changing transplant from the generosity of 435 deceased donors and their families.

In an effort to ensure even more Australians lives are saved through organ transplant, the Australian Government today announced the release of new Ethical and Clinical Guidelines for organ transplantation.

The Ethical and Clinical Guidelines, which supersede the Transplantation Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ) Organ Transplantation from Deceased Donors: Consensus Statement on Eligibility Criteria and Allocation Protocols, are the culmination of a collaborative effort by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), the Organ and Tissue Authority and TSANZ.

The NHMRC ‘Ethical Guidelines for organ transplantation from deceased donors’ and TSANZ ‘Clinical Guidelines for organ transplantation from deceased donors’, were released at the TSANZ annual scientific meeting in Sydney today.

Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care Ken Wyatt said the development of the Ethical and Clinical Guidelines highlights the strength of the collaboration between the donation and transplantation sectors.

“Collaboration like this will help us improve donation rates, increasing access to life saving transplants and enable better health outcomes for all Australians,” Minister Wyatt said.

“The guidelines provide an overarching framework for ethical and clinical practice to assist health professionals in assessing complex issues when making decisions regarding organ transplantation.

“They also provide information for potential organ transplant recipients and their families, carers and friends.”

Minister Wyatt said that determining whether a person is eligible to receive a donated organ, in an environment where need outweighs availability, involves balancing ethical issues.

“Given the relative shortage of donor organs, there will always be people who would benefit from an organ transplant but will not be able to receive one. Therefore it is essential that guidelines on organ allocation and transplantation are ethically sound and transparent,” he said.
The Clinical Guidelines provide local and international best practice to guide health professionals when making the complex decisions about organ transplantation.

They address the criteria and processes used to balance the needs of individuals with end-stage organ failure and the obligation of transplant teams to exercise responsible stewardship of the community’s healthcare resources, including donated organs.

In releasing the guidelines, Minister Wyatt paid tribute to all donors and their families who agree to organ donation.

“In 2016 deceased organ donation has continued to break records in Australia with 129 organ donors in January to March this year, compared to 98 over the same period in 2015 (32% growth on 2015),” Minister Wyatt said.

The Ethical Guidelines were developed by the NHMRC’s Australian Health Ethics Committee and inform the TSANZ Clinical Guidelines and will assist health professionals when decisions are needed about entry onto organ transplant waiting lists, donor suitability and organ allocation protocols.

The Clinical Guidelines provide guidance to clinical practice of transplantation in Australia.


For more information: www.donatelife.gov.au.

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