



October 21, 2019

**Tissue and Eye Banks and Organ Procurement Organizations
Respond to Inaccurate and Sensationalized Reporting by Los Angeles Times**

The Los Angeles Times, in its “Bodies of Evidence” articles, has done a tremendous disservice to the goal of increasing organ, eye and tissue donations in the United States. On behalf of the nation’s tissue banks, eye banks and organ procurement organizations (OPOs), we can assure everyone that the circumstances described in these articles simply do not exist as described.

A complex and highly regulated system for organ, eye and tissue donation in the United States ensures the integrity of our donation and recovery process. Additionally, laws in every state clearly outline how medical examiners, OPOs, eye and tissue banks must work together to ensure the dual goals of determining cause and manner of death while facilitating organ donation and recovery.

In its [response](#) to the Times, the National Association of Medical Examiners stated its support for organ and tissue donation and reiterated its position that “With cooperation and communication, donation can be accomplished without compromising death investigations.”

The fact is, organ, eye and tissue donation does not prevent criminal prosecution, and in many cases the collaboration will support investigations. There are countless examples around the country where information gathered by OPOs, eye and tissue banks in their medical assessments of potential donors has aided the work of medical examiners. More significantly, the public benefits greatly from the cooperative relationships between MEs and the professionals who make up our organizations. More donations of life-changing organs, eyes and tissues are being facilitated, which means more lives saved and improved.

There is a critical need for vital organs, eyes and tissues in the United States. To serve those needs, OPOs, tissue and eye banks, with support and collaboration of medical examiners and coroners, helped facilitate more than 33,000 organ transplants, 85,000 corneal transplants, and 1.5 million allograft tissue transplants in 2018.

Everyone should know that in registering their decision to be an organ, eye and tissue donor, they can have faith in the integrity of the system and in OPOs and tissue and eye banks to be good stewards of the life-changing organs and tissues given. Choosing to be a donor does not compromise a death investigation, it offers hope to those in need of a transplant and provides comfort and healing to donor families.

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