

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Can an organ donor, the donor's family or the recipient make contact with the other side? Will organ transplant organizations help both sides contact one another?

A: In Ontario, either party may initiate the contact. However, all contact must be done through The Trillium Gift of Life Network. Parties send their letters to Trillium, which are then forwarded to the other party. Trillium will review the letter to screen out identifying information before sending the letter to the intended recipient. This is in order to ensure the communication is anonymous. Trillium does not allow the two sides to meet even if they both request it.

Does this system differ across Canada? What about in other countries?

A: The communication system is fairly universal. From British Columbia to the Maritimes, the process for communication does not differ from the Ontario process in any substantial way. It was not possible to secure information for Quebec and therefore their system is to be omitted from the above.

Internationally, the United States, United Kingdom and most of Australia, have a system almost identical to the Ontario model. Their systems differ in one important aspect, however, in that they will allow a face-to-face meeting if enough time has passed and both parties agree to it.

Can you go around the organization communication process and contact or meet the other party?

A: Although there is no prohibition on contact, people will want to be cautious because people are entitled to their personal space and privacy. If individuals do not wish to be contacted it could potentially lead to action on the part of the individual to make the conduct cease. As a result, the person making the conduct may find themselves in a situation they would have wanted to avoid.

Have there been any attempts to reform the system, similar to the recent changes to adoption privacy in Ontario?

A: There does not appear to be any controversy or calls for reform. Most organizations and governments in Ontario, in Canada and across

the world appear satisfied with the current process. This is because it ensures all parties are able to talk to one another while staying within their comfort zone. In Nova Scotia, there is a movement in its infancy, which is looking into whether their provincial system can be changed to mirror the international systems.

What legislation and organizations can I look to for more information?

A: Each province has its own legislation and organization regarding organ transplants. They are as follows:

Ontario:

Organization: Trillium Gift of Life Network

(<http://www.giftoflife.on.ca>)

Legislation: *The Trillium Gift of Life Network Act; Human Tissue Gift Amendment Act; Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act; Personal Health Information Protection Act*

British Columbia:

Organization: BC Transplant

(<http://www.transplant.bc.ca/index.asp>)

Legislation: *Human Tissue Gift Act*

Alberta:

Organization: Human Organ Procurement and Exchange Program

(<http://www.capitalhealth.ca/YourHealth/Clinical/Transplant/HOPE.htm>)

Legislation: *Human Tissue and Organ Donation Act*

Saskatchewan:

Organization: Saskatchewan Transplant Program

(http://www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca/your_health/ps_specialty_services.htm)

Legislation: *Human Tissue Gift Act*

Manitoba:

Organization: Manitoba Transplant Program

(<http://www.transplantmanitoba.ca/>)

Legislation: *Human Tissue Gift Act*

New Brunswick:

Organization: New Brunswick Organ/Tissue Procurement Program

(<http://www.gnb.ca/0217/organ-e.asp>)

Legislation: *Human Tissue Gift Act*

Nova Scotia:

Organization: Nova Scotia Provincial Organ and Tissue Donation Program

<http://www.legacyoflife.ns.ca/index.html>)

Legislation: Human Tissue Gift Act

Newfoundland and Labrador:

Organization: The Organ Procurement and Exchange of Newfoundland and Labrador

www.easternhealth.ca)

Legislation: Human Tissue Act

Prince Edward Island:

Organization: PEI Coalition on Organ and Tissue Donation

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/infopei/index.php3?number=50850&lang=E>)

Legislation: Human Tissue Donation Act

Quebec:

[Information Omitted]

United States:

Organization: United Network for Organ Sharing

<http://www.unos.org>)

Legislation: Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996

United Kingdom:

Organization: Organ Donation and Transplantation Directorate

<http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk>)

Legislation: Human Tissue Act 2004

Australia:

Organization: LifeGift - responsible for New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and Australian Capital Territory)

<http://www.organdonor.com.au/>)

Legislation: Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Bill 2008