

SUCCESS IN REAPPROACHING FAMILIES: FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH INCREASED CONSENT RATES WITH FAMILIES WHO INITIALLY DECLINE DONATION

Kathryn Calderon, RN, CPTC, Family Resource Coordinator, California Transplant Donor Network, Oakland, Ca.

Purpose: This study was conducted to identify the factors associated with positive outcomes when families are reapproached regarding donation.

Methods: The reapproach phase of the consent process in one OPO was studied over a 3 year period. Reapproach is defined as reopening the donation conversation with families who have already said no to hospital staff or OPO employee prior to hearing the relevant information. A Consent Team was formed consisting of management, a psychologist and Family Resource Coordinators (FRCs), whose main function was to request consent. All requestors, FRC's and non-FRC's, were interviewed regarding successful and challenging aspects of reapproach conversations. Consent Team debriefings and discussions were held with the goal of developing specific recommendations for reapproach. Recommendations regarding languaging, sequencing and managing intense emotion were presented to the Consent Team. In year 3, requestors were surveyed regarding level of confidence in reapproaching families.

Results: A total of 277 reapproaches were conducted with increasing success, 8% (2002), 16.5% (2003) and 30% (2004). Of the OPO's successful approaches 98% followed hospital initiated declines to donation. FRC's performed 94% of successful reapproaches. Beginning year 2002, staffs confidence in reapproach was low as requestors feared being intrusive. Survey results in 2004 confirm FRC's confidence increased as consented families confirmed the hospital had approached regarding donation before they could understand the death. Families agreed with FRC's that they would have missed an opportunity for healing if they had not received the information which they were entitled. Requestors not involved in the Consent Team had decreased levels of confidence.

Conclusion: Positive reapproach outcomes occur when initiated after families have time to process death. Development of Consent and FRC teams increase consent. Reapproach outcomes increase when FRC's perfect their practices in a focused, supportive environment. Families embrace of organ donation during reapproach positively impacts the FRC's confidence. FRC's confidence enable reapproaches to be relaxed, focusing on offering an opportunity for healing rather than fear of being intrusive.