



IMPACT OF BRAIN DEATH DIAGNOSIS FOR FAMILIES

*Placing the choice to conduct brain death testing and declaration of death on a family or legal decision-maker is unnecessary because it is the physician's responsibility to determine death. Moreover, significant research demonstrates that end-of-life decision-making, especially related to withdrawal of treatment, can negatively impact the decision maker by contributing to complicated grief and bereavement, depression and post-traumatic stress.*1,2,3*

Donor Alliance is a member of the Association of Organ Procurement Organizations. Recently, another OPO, Midwest Transplant Network, shared survey results of their donor families to determine the impact of brain death declaration. Here is a sampling of their responses:

"It means my husband died of his injuries and not because of a decision I made...I was having so much guilt about that."

"My family was in conflict over when to move to comfort care and finding out she was brain dead meant we could all be on the same page."

"I will never have to wonder if I made the right decision about turning off the ventilator, that is such a relief."

"It means he is no longer suffering and feeling pain."

"I have never been more relieved than I feel right now. ~I needed there to be an answer to my prayers because I could NOT make this decision."

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