

### **ASTS Statement on Conscious DCD**

The issue of conscious DCD came forth to the leadership of the ASTS from a member who inquired whether the ASTS had a policy that would help guide members through these potentially emotionally charged situations. The leadership asked the Ethics Committee to address the member's concern.

#### Definition of the problem:

There may be clinical situations in which the patient is able to communicate his/her wishes to be an organ donor upon actions that the patient desires the medical team to make that would facilitate death. Such conditions would include high c-spine fracture and cord injury, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

#### ASTS Principles Regarding Conscious DCD

1. Donation from the conscious donor who dies after withdrawal of ventilator support with either a high c-spine fracture or with an illness such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis **is ethically** appropriate based on the ethical principle of **Autonomy**.
2. If members or programs feel an ethical or moral obligation to not participate in this donation process, they should be able to decline to participate in the process of donation or the utilization of organs from such donations without penalty.
3. Programs or members who decline to participate in the process of donation and utilization of organs from the "conscious donor" should prospectively notify the Organ Procurement Organization, which is responsible for identifying a willing surgeon or program.
4. In the acutely injured patient, it is likely that deferment of authorization of donation should take into account the emotional vulnerability of the injured patient and how it may impact decision-making. There should be a "cooling off" period between injury/diagnosis and the decision to initiate action that would lead to death and donation.
5. There is a need for assurance that processes are in place to proceed with DCD donation in an ethically and clinically appropriate circumstance through the OPO.
6. ASTS members should adhere to the dead donor rule.
7. ASTS members do not condone euthanasia or assisted suicide.
8. ASTS members are compelled to maintain the public trust.