

ORGAN DONATION

WITH AN AVERAGE OF MORE THAN 3.6 TRANSPLANTED ORGANS PER DONOR IN 2009 AND MORE THAN 430 TRANSPLANT RECIPIENTS, QUÉBEC SETS A NEW HISTORIC RECORD

Montreal, February 10, 2010 – Owing to the generosity of Quebecers, **499 organs from 138 donors deceased in 2009 were transplanted into 431 recipients.** Though there were 13 fewer donors than in 2008, Québec posted an average of more than 3.6 transplanted organs per deceased donor in 2009, placing the province among the leaders in Canada and even North America. “We’re particularly proud of the sustained collaboration of professionals in hospitals in 2009,” says Louis Beaulieu, executive director of Québec-Transplant, the organization responsible for coordinating the organ donation process in support of hospitals. “The sharing of best clinical practices has been a determining factor in increasing the supply of organs available for transplantation in the last five years, and this has resulted in an almost 15% increase in the number of organs transplanted.” The process culminating in organ donation involves a race against time requiring a synergy between all stakeholders in the chain of life. “It’s important to emphasize that as well as the 138 actual donors, some 26 other donors were not able to reach the end of the organ donation process for medical reasons making it impossible to transplant the organs. The generosity of these 26 people and their families deserves to be recognized, however,” says Dr. Michel Carrier, medical director of Québec-Transplant.

According to data collected by Québec-Transplant, some 1,202 people were waiting for an organ transplant on December 31, 2009, an increase of 3.6% over 2008. Moreover, more than 75% of the people on the single waiting list managed by Québec-Transplant were waiting for a kidney transplant, and their numbers continue to increase, thus presenting a major challenge to our organization. While these people may receive a kidney from a donor after neurological determination of death, a donor after cardiac death or a living donor, the supply remains largely inadequate. Since April of 2007, several Québec-based hospitals have given families the opportunity to donate organs on behalf of a loved one after cardiac death (DCD), in accordance with a medical protocol set out as part of a pilot project involving 15 donors. The assessment of DCD is underway, and the results as well as the ensuring recommendations will be made public in the spring. Living donation also offers hope to persons waiting for a transplant, since it is the ideal treatment for the health of the person and our society alike. At present, Québec-Transplant’s mandate does not include the coordination of living donation, though the organization is able to make a useful contribution and has done just that by raising awareness about the importance of organ donation.

According to Mr. Beaulieu, Québec can do more to ensure that an ever-increasing number of people benefit from organ transplantation. The experience of other provinces or countries shows that improved results can be brought about through the implementation of concerted strategies involving all players in the system. To increase the number of donations and transplantations and thus reduce the number of deaths among patients waiting for an organ transplant, a number of proven strategies are used: the dissemination of best clinical practices; financial assistance to hospitals to support the practice of organ donation and transplantation; the consolidation and development of Québec-Transplant, which can be an even greater catalyst for concerted efforts among players in the organ donation and transplantation system and for targeted awareness campaigns, particularly with young people and cultural communities. Québec-Transplant will soon publish its strategic plan for 2010-2014.

Mr. Beaulieu points out that barely 1% of hospital deaths give rise to organ donation. For this reason, every consent counts. When the wishes of the deceased are known, the decision to proceed with the donation is made easier for loved ones. Thus, following Québec-Transplant's organ donation awareness campaign in the fall of 2009, a survey carried out on its behalf in December 2009 revealed that 55% of respondents said that they had taken steps to indicate their wish to donate organs, compared to 51% in August 2008. According to Mr. Beaulieu, this shows that awareness promotion in schools and businesses must be stepped up so that all can participate in this act of human solidarity. Expressing a wish to bequeath organs as an inheritance consists above all in informing one's family, once the decision is made. To know how to indicate your consent or to obtain a consent sticker, please go to www.signezdon.ca. Persons interested in becoming donors may also ask their notary to include their names on the Registre des consentements au don d'organes et de tissus: www.cdnq.org (Registry of consent for organ and tissue donors)

About Québec-Transplant

Québec-Transplant is the agency responsible for coordinating organ donation in Québec. Its mission is to contribute to the ongoing improvement in the quality of services offered to persons in need of an organ transplant by coordinating and facilitating activities involving the identification of potential donors as well as the procurement and allocation of organs. Québec-Transplant also strives to promote organ donation and to raise public awareness of its importance.

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INFORMATION DOCUMENT

In the last ten years, Québec has been a leader when it comes to the number of donors deceased per million inhabitants:

- In 2009, the number of donors per million inhabitants (DPMI): Québec -17.6; Ontario -16.7
- In 2008, DPMI: Québec – 19.4; Ontario -13.7; Canada: 14.5

Principal causes of death among organ donors in 2009

- Stroke: 62%; head trauma: 18%; Anoxia: 16%
- Average age of donor: 49 years old Men: 55% Women: 45%
- Children (0 to 18 years old) accounted for 6.5% of donors in 2009.
- Average age of persons waiting for a transplant: 51 years old
- Average age of transplant recipients: 49 years old

Some 69 Québec-based hospitals referred potential donors to Québec-Transplant in 2009.

Death while waiting for a transplant

- According to data made available by hospitals for 2009: some 58 deaths, compared to 45 deaths in 2008. Of this number, between 15 and 20% of deaths were not related to the wait for a transplant.

Source: Québec-Transplant, February 10, 2010