

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT
for
DELEGATION TO NANAIMO CITY COUNCIL, MAY 14TH
by
THE KIDNEY FOUNDATION OF CANADA

At its 2016 conference UBCM passed the following motion:

“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM call upon Mayors and Council Members to accept the Kidney Foundation’s challenge to *Save Lives Through Organ Donation* in their communities and to work with the Foundation to increase the number of people registered as organ donors in their respective communities.”

At the 2017 conference, a number of municipal legislators (although, regrettably, none from Nanaimo) stopped by our booth to talk with us about the issue and to be videotaped for presentation of their comments on our Youtube program “*Plugged In*” which runs in Nanaimo 4 days a week on Shaw Cable.

Our purpose here today is to request that the City of Nanaimo pass a resolution in support of the Organ Donor programme, in line with the resolution of the UBCM.

THE ISSUE

The medical community estimates, based on its experience, that 1 Canadian in 10 is living with Chronic Kidney Disease, although most of them don’t know it. Why not? Because it’s a disease with no symptoms until the patient has lost about 80% of his/her kidney function. Based on census numbers, that means that there could be as many as 9,000 citizens of Nanaimo living unknowingly with this disease.

Kidney disease is a chronic progressive disease in which the kidneys gradually lose their ability to cope with their primary purpose of filtering toxins out of the blood stream. When the kidneys finally fail altogether, the life expectancy is about 5-7 days unless therapy is instituted.. There is no cure for kidney disease today - just two forms of therapy: *dialysis*, which is intended as a short term process to remove toxins from the bloodstream through a flushing process, and transplantation, the process of replacing the failed kidney with a new organ from a donor, either living or deceased. In British Columbia in 2016, there were 305 kidney transplants completed, with 210 of them from deceased donors and 95 from living donors.

THE IMPACT OF ORGAN DONATION

Organ transplantation is the best and most permanent therapy available to a kidney patient, while dialysis is intended as a temporary life-sustaining therapy for a patient awaiting the opportunity for a transplant. Kidney patients on dialysis in BC can expect to wait for about five years to receive a new kidney, depending upon the patient’s blood type. The expectation is that about half of those patients will die on the waiting list.

(Over)

With about 300 transplants taking place each year, and with this number limited by the supply of organs, the successful transplants do not match the number of patients on the “official” waiting list, which runs between 300 and 400 patients. Significantly, there are probably another 400-500 patients waiting to get on the “official” list..

The success of the transplant program is heavily dependent upon deceased donors, as illustrated by the figures above for 2016. In 2016, a survey commissioned by The Kidney Foundation’s BCY Branch showed that some 90% of BC residents approved of organ transplantation, but at the time of the survey, only about 18% had registered with the organ donor data bank. Surprisingly some 51% of respondents believed that they had become organ donors through a sticker on their driver’s licence - a process that was discontinued 18 years ago with the advent of the on-line data bank.!

In order to become a donor a registrant needs to die in a trauma situation such as an auto accident or some similar trauma. A death from “old age” disqualifies the registrant from being a donor. As a result only about 2-3% of registered donors will ever become an actual donor.

In response to the information revealed by the survey, the BCY Branch undertook to increase the number of registered donors by 50% over 5 years, ending in 2021. With the assistance of the BC Service Centres, the number of registered donors has been increased to about 25% of the BC population - but we are only about half way to our goal.

OUR REQUEST

We are asking the City of Nanaimo to join us in providing education to our citizens about this problem. We would like to discuss with the City how we might partner in moving towards our goal in Nanaimo. Tonight’s request is a first step in that process, and we respectfully request your positive consideration.