

**HB**

**214**

# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bill Version: HB 214  
 ( ) Publish Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction):  
 Title Anatomical Gifts  
 Sponsor McGuire, Kerttula, Gruenberg  
 Requester State Affairs

Dept. Affected: Commerce  
 RDU Occupational Licensing (117)  
 Component Occupational Licensing  
 Component No. 2360

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )</b>						
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**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other 1156 - Receipt Supported Services						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2005) cost: 0.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2006 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

HB 214 amends AS 13.50 relating to anatomical gifts and the gift donor registry program. New funds are not required to implement the provisions of this bill.

Prepared by: Jennifer Strickler, Administrative Manager  
 Division: Occupational Licensing  
 Approved by: Edgar Blatchford, Commissioner  
 Agency: Commerce, Community, and Economic Development

Phone: (907) 465-2144  
 Date/Time: 3/29/05 6:31 PM  
 Date: 3/29/2005

# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bill Version: HB214-DHSS-DPH-03-30-05  
 ( ) Publish Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services  
 RDU: Public Health  
 Component: Community Health/EMS Services

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title: ANATOMICAL GIFTS

Sponsor: MCGUIRE  
 Requester: \_\_\_\_\_

Component No. 2078

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Personal Services	2.7					
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies	3.8					
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES (0)</b>						
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**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	6.5					
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other(Specify Type-do not abbreviate)						
Other(Specify Type-do not abbreviate)						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2005) cost: \_\_\_\_\_

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2006 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill would add a requirement for EMS responders to notify an organ procurement agency and transmit organ donation documentation for deaths which occur outside of a hospital. The fiscal note addresses the cost to the state of mailing out notice of the reporting requirement to EMS providers, instructors, First Responder services, and Ground and Air Medical Services, but does not reflect the cost to the services, many of whom are operating under severe fiscal constraints, including rural EMS services.

Staff time: Preparation of training materials & 3 mailings to EMS providers, instructors & services: \$2.7.

Supplies: Supplies & postage for 3 mailings: \$3.8.

Prepared by: Richard Mandsager, MD  
 Division: Public Health  
 Approved by: Joel S. Gilbertson, Commissioner  
 Agency: Department of Health and Social Services

Phone: 465-3090  
 Date/Time: 03/30/2005  
 Date: 03/30/2005

# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bill Version: HB214-DPS-ASTD-3-30-05  
 () Publish Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected: Public Safety  
 Title "An Act relating to anatomical gifts and the anatomical RDU Alaska State Troopers  
gift donor registry program." Component AST Detachments  
 Sponsor Representative McGuire  
 Requester House State Affairs Component No. 2325

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
-----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )</b>						
-------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY 2005) cost: 0.0  
 Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2006 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill impacts the Department of Public Safety by amending AS 13.52.200. The amendment requires law enforcement officers dealing with a body or individual from a death or impending death that is taken to a hospital, to additionally notify a procurement organization with documentation of an anatomical gift (organ donation) or evidence of refusal to make a gift. Also, if the individual or body is not taken to a hospital, law enforcement officers shall now notify a procurement organization and send the document or other evidence to the procurement organization.

Passage of this bill will have no fiscal impact on the Department of Public Safety.

Prepared by: Lieutenant Todd Sharp Phone 907-465-3223  
 Division: Alaska State Troopers Date/Time 3/30/05 4:35 PM  
 Approved by: Commissioner William Tardeske Date 3/30/2005  
 Agency: Department of Public Safety

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\*\*\* THIS SECTION IS CURRENT THROUGH THE MARCH 17, 2005 ISSUE OF \*\*\*  
\*\*\* THE FEDERAL REGISTER \*\*\*

TITLE 21 -- FOOD AND DRUGS  
CHAPTER I -- FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
SUBCHAPTER L -- REGULATIONS UNDER CERTAIN OTHER ACTS ADMINISTERED BY THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION  
PART 1271 -- HUMAN CELLS, TISSUES, AND CELLULAR AND TISSUE-BASED PRODUCTS  
SUBPART D -- CURRENT GOOD TISSUE PRACTICE [EFFECTIVE MAY 25, 2005.]

21 CFR 1271.170

§ 1271.170 Personnel. [Effective May 25, 2005.]

[PUBLISHER'S NOTE: This section was added at 69 FR 68612, 68683, Nov. 24, 2004, effective May 25, 2005.]

- (a) General. You must have personnel sufficient to ensure compliance with the requirements of this part.
- (b) Competent performance of functions. You must have personnel with the necessary education, experience, and training to ensure competent performance of their assigned functions. Personnel must perform only those activities for which they are qualified and authorized.
- (c) Training. You must train all personnel, and retrain as necessary, to perform their assigned responsibilities adequately.

**HISTORY:** [69 FR 68612, 68683, Nov. 24, 2004]

**AUTHORITY:** AUTHORITY NOTE APPLICABLE TO ENTIRE PART :  
42 U.S.C. 216, 243, 264, 271.

**NOTES:** [EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: 69 FR 68612, 68683, Nov. 24, 2004, added Subpart D, effective May 25, 2005.]

NOTES APPLICABLE TO ENTIRE TITLE:

Cross References: Food Safety and Inspection Services, Department of Agriculture: See Meat and Poultry Inspection, 9 CFR CHAPTER III.

Federal Trade Commission: See Commercial Practices, 16 CFR chapter I.

U.S. Customs Service, Department of the Treasury: See Customs Duties, 19 CFR chapter I.

Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury: See Internal Revenue, 26 CFR chapter I.

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, Department of the Treasury: See Alcohol, Tobacco Production and Firearms, 27 CFR chapter I.

NOTES APPLICABLE TO ENTIRE CHAPTER:

[EDITORIAL NOTE: For nomenclature changes to chapter I see 59 FR 14366, Mar. 28, 1994.]

[PUBLISHER'S NOTE: For the uniform compliance date for food labeling regulations under Chapter I, see 61 FR 67710, Dec. 24, 1996; 61 FR 68145, Dec. 27, 1996; 62 FR 49881, Sep. 23, 1997.]

NOTES APPLICABLE TO ENTIRE PART :

[PUBLISHER'S NOTE: The authority citation for Part 1271 was revised at 69 FR 29786, 29829, May 25, 2004, effective May 25, 2005. For the convenience of the user, the authority citation effective May 25, 2005, has been set out below:

42 U.S.C. 216, 243, 263a, 264, 271.]

111 words

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\*\*\* THIS SECTION IS CURRENT THROUGH THE MARCH 17, 2005 ISSUE OF \*\*\*  
\*\*\* THE FEDERAL REGISTER \*\*\*

TITLE 42 -- PUBLIC HEALTH  
CHAPTER IV -- CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES  
SUBCHAPTER G -- STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATION  
PART 482 -- CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION FOR HOSPITALS  
SUBPART C -- BASIC HOSPITAL FUNCTIONS

42 CFR 482.45

§ 482.45 Condition of participation: Organ, tissue, and eye procurement

(a) Standard: Organ procurement responsibilities. The hospital must have and implement written protocols that:

(1) Incorporate an agreement with an OPO designated under part 486 of this chapter, under which it must notify, in a timely manner, the OPO or a third party designated by the OPO of individuals whose death is imminent or who have died in the hospital. The OPO determines medical suitability for organ donation and, in the absence of alternative arrangements by the hospital, the OPO determines medical suitability for tissue and eye donation, using the definition of potential tissue and eye donor and the notification protocol developed in consultation with the tissue and eye banks identified by the hospital for this purpose;

(2) Incorporate an agreement with at least one tissue bank and at least one eye bank to cooperate in the retrieval, processing, preservation, storage and distribution of tissues and eyes, as may be appropriate to assure that all usable tissues and eyes are obtained from potential donors, insofar as such an agreement does not interfere with organ procurement;

(3) Ensure, in collaboration with the designated OPO, that the family of each potential donor is informed of its options to donate organs, tissues, or eyes or to decline to donate. The individual designated by the hospital to initiate the request to the family must be an organ procurement representative or a designated requestor. A designated requestor is an individual who has completed a course offered or approved by the OPO and designed in conjunction with the tissue and eye bank community in the methodology for approaching potential donor families and requesting organ or tissue donation;

(4) Encourage discretion and sensitivity with respect to the circumstances, views, and beliefs of the families of potential donors;

(5) Ensure that the hospital works cooperatively with the designated OPO, tissue bank and eye bank in educating staff on donation issues, reviewing death records to improve identification of potential donors, and maintaining potential donors while necessary testing and placement of potential donated organs, tissues, and eyes take place.

(b) Standard: Organ transplantation responsibilities. (1) A hospital in which organ transplants are performed must be a member of the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) established and operated in accordance with section 372 of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act (42 U.S.C. 274) and abide by its rules. The term "rules of the OPTN" means those rules provided for in regulations issued by the Secretary in accordance with section 372 of the PHS Act which are enforceable under 42 CFR 121.10. No hospital is considered to be out of compliance with section 1138(a)(1)(B) of the Act, or with the requirements of this paragraph, unless the Secretary has given the OPTN formal

## 42 CFR 482.45

notice that he or she approves the decision to exclude the hospital from the OPTN and has notified the hospital in writing.

(2) For purposes of these standards, the term "organ" means a human kidney, liver, heart, lung, or pancreas.

(3) If a hospital performs any type of transplants, it must provide organ-transplant-related data, as requested by the OPTN, the Scientific Registry, and the OPOs. The hospital must also provide such data directly to the Department when requested by the Secretary.

**HISTORY:** [63 *FR* 33856, 33874, June 22, 1998]

**AUTHORITY:** AUTHORITY NOTE APPLICABLE TO ENTIRE PART:  
Secs. 1102 and 1871 of the Social Security Act (42 *U.S.C.* 1302 and 1395hh).

**NOTES:** [EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: 63 *FR* 33856, 33874, June 22, 1998, added this section, effective Aug. 21, 1998.]

**NOTES APPLICABLE TO ENTIRE CHAPTER:**

[PUBLISHER'S NOTE: Nomenclature changes affecting Chapter IV appear at 45 *FR* 53806, Aug. 13, 1980; 50 *FR* 12741, Mar. 29, 1985; 50 *FR* 33034, Aug. 16, 1985; 51 *FR* 41338, Nov. 14, 1986; 53 *FR* 6634, Mar. 2, 1988; 53 *FR* 47201, Nov. 22, 1988; 56 *FR* 8852, Mar. 1, 1991; 66 *FR* 39450, 39452, July 31, 2001; 67 *FR* 36539, 36540, May 24, 2002.]

**NOTES APPLICABLE TO ENTIRE PART:**

[PUBLISHER'S NOTE: For Federal Register citations concerning Part 482 clarifications, see: 67 *FR* 61805, Oct. 2, 2002.]

574 words

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

## Session

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**REPRESENTATIVE LESLIE MCGUIRE**  
**HOUSE DISTRICT 28**

Chair  
Judiciary Committee

Member  
House Leadership  
Rules Committee  
Health, Education  
& Social Services  
Committee  
Oil & Gas Committee  
Military & Veterans'  
Affairs Committee

## Sponsor Statement HB 214

### **"An Act relating to anatomical gifts and the anatomical gift donor registry program."**

Last year the Alaska Legislature passed the Anatomical Gifts Registry Bill, which created an official organ donor registry program at the Department of Motor Vehicles. Through this program an organ donor's wishes are kept on record in a central database and are transferred to Life Alaska Donor Services, the state's organ & tissue donor program. This information allows Life Alaska to quickly match the donor's gift to a potential recipient, saving time and lives.

HB 214 makes several simple but important changes to existing law to further the intent of the original enabling legislation and to continue to move the donor registry forward in the State of Alaska. This bill works to make the Alaska Donor Registry program inclusive rather than exclusive, offers expanded definitions that act to clarify the agencies that are responsible for donation within the state as well as for the people who are trained to do the actual recovery procedures, allows increased notification for greater donation potential, and clears up inconsistencies between federal rulings and state laws.

When the Anatomical Gifts Registry Bill was submitted for consideration and subsequently passed into law in the 2004 legislative session, it was done so with the clear intent that the donor registry be operated from within the State of Alaska and not controlled by an out-of-state agency. However, as the law now reads, an out-of-state organ procurement organization has sole control of the registry, excluding the in-state procurement organization. HB 214 would change AS 13.50 to be inclusive rather than exclusive allowing access to both in-state and out-of-state procurement organizations. The current definition of "procurement organization" within AS 13.50.190 and the definition of "organ procurement organization" within AS 13.52.390 are defined as the "organization designated by the United States Department of Health and Human Services..." This definition is restricted to the regional organ procurement organization only. While it is important to have the regional organ procurement organization represented in the state, it is equally important that the in-state procurement organization not be excluded from donation and donation decisions that benefit all Alaskans. HB 214 will change the definitions within both sections to be more inclusive of all procurement organizations and allow them to function equally for the good of donation throughout Alaska.

Also, the current definition of "technician" within AS 13.52.390 is too restrictive and not in line with the laws of any other state. Recognized technicians throughout the state who recover tissues have never been licensed or certified by the State Medical Board. In fact, the State Medical Board does not have a process to license or certify technicians to procure tissues. The FDA, which regulates the tissue procurement agencies, defines a technician under 21 CFR 1271.170 for recovery personnel only by "requir[ing] establishments to employ sufficient personnel with the necessary education, experience, and training to ensure competent performance of their assigned functions." HB 214 will change the definition of technician to more closely reflect the good tissue practices set out by the federal government.

In addition, AS 13.52.200(e) currently only addresses notification to the hospital. HB 214 would expand notification by allowing for law enforcement officers, fire fighters, paramedics, or other emergency rescuer personnel to contact a procurement organization directly. This would allow timely notification on non-hospital deaths to increase the potential of donation within the state.

Finally, there are two paragraphs within AS 13.52 that will be repealed in HB 214; the first being AS 13.52.200(b). This is in direct contradiction to 42 CFR 482.45, which requires the hospital to notify a procurement organization that will determine suitability of donation on *all* deaths or *imminent* deaths. The second is AS 13.52.200(c). This is burdensome to the hospital and is duplicating efforts that are already being done.

# LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES  
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY  
STATE OF ALASKA

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FAX (907) 465-2029  
Mail Stop 3101


State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182  
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

## MEMORANDUM

March 24, 2005

**SUBJECT:** Sectional Summary of HB 214 relating to anatomical gifts and the anatomical gift donor registry program  
(Work Order No. 24-LS0410\F)

**TO:** Representative Lesil McGuire  
Attn: Vanessa

**FROM:**  Theresa Bannister  
Legislative Counsel

You have requested a sectional summary of the above-described bill. As a preliminary matter, note that a sectional summary of a bill should not be considered an authoritative interpretation of the bill and the bill itself is the best statement of its contents.

**Section 1.** Defines "procurement organization" for the donor registry program.

**Section 2.** Adds definitions of "donor," "gift," and "part" for the donor registry program.

**Section 3.** Deletes a reference to AS 13.52.200 to reflect the repeal of AS 13.52.200(c) by sec. 11 of the bill.

**Section 4.** Makes conforming amendments to reflect the change in terminology to "procurement organization."

**Section 5.** Makes conforming amendments to reflect the change in terminology to "procurement organization."

**Section 6.** If an individual or body is taken to a hospital, and if a document of gift or evidence of refusal to make a gift is located under AS 13.52.200(d)(1), this subsection requires the hospital and a procurement organization to be notified of the contents of the document of gift or the evidence of refusal. If the individual or body is not taken to a hospital, requires certain persons (those identified in AS 13.52.200(d)(1)) to notify a procurement organization and send the document or evidence to the procurement organization.

**Section 7.** Makes a conforming amendment to reflect the change in terminology to "procurement organization."

Sectional

Representative Lesil McGuire  
March 24, 2005  
Page 2

**Section 8.** Makes a conforming change to reflect the repeal of AS 13.52.200(b) and (c) by sec. 11 of the bill.

**Section 9.** Defines "procurement organization" for AS 13.52.200.

**Section 10.** Amends the definition of "technician" for AS 13.52 to mean an individual who has the education, training, and experience necessary to competently remove or process a part.

**Section 11.** Repeals a provision stating that a hospital administrator (or a designee) is not required to contact an organ procurement organization if an anatomical gift is not suitable for donation. Repeals a provision requiring that an entry be made in a patient's record relating to the discussion by a representative of an organ procurement organization with the family, agent, or surrogate of the patient. Repeals the definition of "organ procurement organization."

If I may be of further assistance, please advise.

TLB:med  
05-211.med



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## Life Alaska moves donor registry forward

Sunday, March 13, 2005 - by Joy Mapaye

**Anchorage, Alaska** - Last year, Life Alaska made a plea to state lawmakers to create a computerized central registry for organ donors.

In June 2004, the registry became a reality with the signing of House Bill 337. The registry would include a new computerized driver's license which allows the Department of Motor Vehicles to enter a donor's information into a central computer system.

By June 2004, roughly 60,000 donors were in the Life Alaska registry. When the first DMV numbers were uploaded this number jumped to 80,000.



Shawn Wilson/KTUU-TV



Shawn Wilson/KTUU-TV

Today, there are about 170,000 donors listed according to the DMV. The registry grows by 200 to 300 names every day.

Life Alaska says it remembers all those who have helped others in a celebration service held each year. Denise Och is one of those at the event. Och lost her son, Nathanael, in an accident about two years ago. The family made the decision to donate his organs and tissues.

"We knew his character. We knew the kind of person that he was, and so the decision that we made as a family was based on what we thought he would want and we've never regretted it," said Och (right).



Shawn Wilson/KTUU-TV

"For years we've had donor cards and other means but the electronic registry allows one by the Internet to check a name instantly. Is this person on the registry? And so we're able to in every case know in Alaska if a person is on the registry," said Bruce Zalneraitis of Life Alaska donor services.



Life Alaska says the direct impact here is the cut down in waiting time, which can mean the difference between life and death. Prior to the change, about 10 to 15 names of people who passed away would appear in the registry every year. Now, five to 10 names appear each week.

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Life Alaska says about 25 other states have some form of electronic registry but the group says this number is changing as new laws go into effect.

 EMAIL ARTICLE  PRINT ARTICLE

**Related articles:**

- **State bill tries to record organ donors (March 14, 2004)**  
Representatives of Alaska's Organ Procurement Program thanked 100 donor families who gathered together Sunday. With the help of the families, the lives of the 80 Alaskans who were at the meeting have been saved.
- **New bill could save thousands of Alaskan lives (June 15, 2004)**  
Gov. Frank Murkowski is scheduled to sign House Bill 337 into law Wednesday. The bill would create an official organ donor registry at the Department of Motor Vehicles, and it is just one way organ donation in Alaska is getting easier.



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## New bill could save thousands of Alaskan lives

June 15, 2004 - by Joy Mapaye

Search

just one way organ donation in Alaska is getting easier.

**Anchorage, Alaska** - Gov. Frank Murkowski is scheduled to sign House Bill 337 into law Wednesday. The bill would create an official organ donor registry at the Department of Motor Vehicles, and it is

At Alaska's Department of Motor Vehicles, an organ donor's wish will now be on record. Currently the department doesn't keep records of those who sign up to become organ and tissue donors, but House Bill 337 will change that, allowing the DMV to transfer an organ donor's wishes to Life Alaska.

"We're very excited that Governor Murkowski is due to sign that into legislation," said Brenda Stewart of Life Alaska donor services.

Stewart says the new registry would allow Life Alaska to quickly match the donor's gift to a potential recipient, saving time and lives.

According to the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, more than 85,000 Americans are on the waiting list for life-saving transplants, and more than 6,000 people who are awaiting a transplant die each year.

The group says it has now begun a major initiative to break down barriers that limit donations, including cultural ones. At Life Alaska, however, that process is well underway with a special partnership at the Alaska Native Medical Center.

"The relationship with Life Alaska has been one that has developed or evolved over years," said Phyllis Goodwin, the director of critical care services at the Alaska Native Medical Center.

Goodwin said that in 1991, when she first arrived at the Alaska Native Medical Center, they didn't do organ donations. But over the years it began working on education campaigns with Life Alaska to help the community and help boost Alaska Native donors.

"We've seen our donation numbers increase over time," Goodwin said.

Goodwin says educational campaigns as well as a growing public awareness on organ and tissue donation are helping. Life Alaska agrees and says one person can make a big difference.

Life Alaska says aside from its educational outreach, it works to help families through the grieving process, and during this time the focus is on those who need help.

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"It's less about a background or a culture of a person and more about reaching out to people in need," Stewart said. "And if that's done in a caring and sensitive way, then it empowers people to make that decision that's right for them."

It's a decision Life Alaska says education, awareness and the new registry at the DMV are all helping people make.

Becoming part of the registry is optional. The new law will go into effect 90 days after the governor signs the bill.

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