

Organ Transplantation after Assisted Suicide or State Execution¹

CMDA affirms the sanctity of every human life, recognizing that life is a gift from God². For individuals with life-threatening disorders, organ transplantation may offer hope of a longer and healthier life. CMDA affirms ethical organ procurement (organ procurement that is not coerced, in which the organs are not purchased or sold, and through which vulnerable persons are not exploited). Organ procurement is not an end to be gained at all costs or through any means. Medicine primarily entails a covenantal relationship between physician and patient, and secondarily with society. This is not merely a utilitarian calculus of the greatest good for the greatest number. The ends, even if they represent a perceived good, are not justified if the means are not God-honoring and according to his biblical statutes.

Persons killed through assisted suicide and prisoners executed by the state are not appropriate sources of organs for transplantation. In both situations coercion is present and renders the decision to donate organs illicit³. Assisted suicide is a moral evil; using organs thus obtained may involve complicity in that evil if such use incentivizes such practice or justifies this moral evil⁴. In the case of executed prisoners coercion is overt and inherently subject to abuse. In the case of assisted suicide those utilizing the organs do not have valid informed consent.

Christian physicians appropriately argue in the public square for the dignity of all persons based on the sanctity of life given by God. While we may work to inform and encourage living donor or cadaveric organ transplantation, we may not encourage organ transplantation after assisted suicide or state execution⁵.

*Approved by the House of Representatives
Passed with 43 approvals, 3 abstentions
April 26, 2012. Ridgecrest, NC*

¹ See CMDA statement *CMDA Overview on Human Organ Transplantation*

² See CMDA statement regarding the *Sanctity of Human Life*

³ See CMDA statement on *Valid Informed Consent as Compassionate Care in Shared Decision-Making*

⁴ See CMDA statement on *Physician Assisted Suicide*

⁵ The Christian Medical & Dental Associations has no statement on capital punishment