Increasing Support and Willingness for Organ Donation within a Hispanic Community: More Strategic Interventions

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The disparity between Hispanic population statistics and the number of Hispanic organ donors is significant in comparison to numbers for other ethnicities. In 2003, there were only 819 Hispanic deceased donors nationwide. Hispanic people are less willing to donate their organs due to various factors. Efforts to raise the number of Hispanic organ donors must be constructed with consideration for social dynamics among Hispanics.

After conducting a review of the academic literature, three key factors were identified and combined to create a blueprint for interventions aimed at increasing the willingness for organ donation in the Hispanic community: a) previous discussion with family members by the potential donor, b) education about the donation process and treatment of the donor’s body, and c) reassurance through trust in the medical establishment are all critical factors that affect the outcome of organ procurement efforts.

Future attempts at increasing organ donation specifically within the Hispanic community must address these three important issues in our community. By moving forward with outreach interventions, myths about organ donation can be dispelled while building trust in the medical staff that will interact with potential donors and their families. This simply affords individuals and families an opportunity to be well informed and have the understanding necessary to make the important decision regarding organ donation. Certainly outreach must be done to increase willingness for donation, but what factors must be considered to have greater impact from these community education interventions?

Outreach must include community-wide education and workplace partnerships, as well as other more classical methods (such as public service announcements, etc.) It is critical to motivate families to talk about these issues beforehand and simultaneously educate them about donation and transplantation. Common misperceptions must be effectively addressed through new donor education programs in order to make progress in closing the organ donor gap.