



## COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS Regarding Body Donation

**\*NOTE** that the University of Hawaii at Manoa, John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM), Willed Body Program is referred to as the WBP.

### ***What is the University of Hawaii at Manoa, JABSOM Willed Body Program?***

The WBP allows you to donate your body after death for use in medical science and education. Donated bodies are primarily used in the education of medical students, physicians, some research and training.

### ***How can I leave my body to medical science?***

Upon request, an Anatomical Gift Donation Form authorizing this selfless gift will be sent to you to be completed and returned. Once the **original** Anatomical Gift Donation Form has been received, reviewed and accepted, you will be sent an Acknowledgement letter and a Donor ID Card. The Donor ID card should be carried with you at all times.

### ***If the Anatomical Gift Donation Form was not completed prior to death, can my body still be donated?***

Yes, it is possible. However, the Anatomical Gift Donation Form must be completed by your legal Next-of-Kin (NOK), and reviewed by the Director who will make the final decision. Your legal NOK should call the WBP immediately at 808-692-1445, as there is a time frame in which the body must be physically received. Pre-enrollment is highly encouraged.

### ***Can I sell my body to medical science?***

No, it is illegal to sell or receive money for a body.

### ***Are there age restrictions for donations?***

All donors must be 18 years of age or older. However, there is no upper age limit for donating.

### ***Who may serve as a witness to my donation?***

Anyone 21 years of age or older, preferably someone expected to be a survivor, may act as a witness. Two witness signatures are required on the Anatomical Gift Donation Form.

### ***Should I inform someone of my donation?***

Yes. Please inform your family and close friends of your wishes. Your Next-of-Kin/Agent or Power of Attorney should have access to a copy of your completed Anatomical Gift Donation Form. Please keep a copy of the completed form for your records.

### ***What expenses are involved if I donate my body?***

Donors who die on Oahu: The WBP will cover all fees for transportation of your body to the School of Medicine and cremation.

Donors who die on a neighbor island or out-of-state: The costs for mortuary preparation and transportation to Honolulu will be at the expense of your family or estate. Once your body has arrived at the Honolulu Airport, the WBP will cover the transportation fees from the Honolulu Airport to the School of Medicine and cremation.

**\*The WBP does NOT provide Death Certificates.** These must be purchased through the State of Hawaii Department of Health (DOH), Vital Records Office.



***If I donate my body to the WBP, can I still donate my organs for transplantation when I die?***

Yes, it is possible, but for *internal transplantable organs* only. These include cornea, heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas, brain and spinal cord only. It is not possible to be a body donor if tissues, such as skin, muscle or bone are donated.

For more information concerning organ donations please call: Legacy of Life Hawaii (808-599-7630) or the Hawaii Lion's Eye Bank & Makana Foundation (808-536-7416).

***Are there any reasons for my donation to be refused?***

Your body may not be accepted if we are not notified within 72 hours after the death, have an infectious disease (Hep-B, Hep-C, HIV, Prion diseases, active TB, COVID-19) or traumatic death. The final decision to accept is at the discretion of the Director. See [General Information](#) page for more details.

***What happens if the WBP refuses my body?***

If the WBP declines or refuses the donation of an individual, it is the family's responsibility to make final arrangements. Thus, if you are considering body donation, we suggest that you make alternative arrangements with a funeral director/mortuary in the event that the WBP is not able to accept your body. ***How often does this happen?*** Seldom is the donation declined or refused. The majority (over 99.5%) of our registered Donors are accepted into the Program upon death.

***If a donation is made and I change my mind, can the donation be cancelled?***

Yes. All that is required to cancel a donation is to submit your request in writing. If you are canceling because you are moving and would like to join a program near your new home, you may register at the nearest medical school.

***Can my family view my body after death at JABSOM?***

No. Viewing of the Donor's body is not possible at the School of Medicine. It may be possible to arrange a viewing/visitation at a local mortuary, at the families' expense, if arrangements have been made ahead of time and coordinated with the WBP Director.

***How long does the WBP keep my body for study and research?***

Medical education and research time averages between 2-18 months with most cremains being returned within 12 months.

***What happens to my body after study and research are completed?***

Your body will be cremated.

***Can my cremains be returned to my family for final disposition?***

Yes. The individual you designate to receive your cremains should be advised of your wishes and should keep us informed of their current address and telephone number.

***What other options are available for disposition of my body?***

You may choose to have your cremains scattered at sea during a memorial service honoring all donors. Your NOK or responsible person will be sent an invitation to the memorial service, after you have completed your teaching program.



***How often do you update Donor information?***

Every three to four years, you will be mailed an Update Form to complete in order to keep the information in your file current. Should you or any of your listed contact person(s) have any change in information before an Update Form is sent, please contact our office at 808-692-1445 or by email, [wbdonor@hawaii.edu](mailto:wbdonor@hawaii.edu).

***What happens if I die outside the State of Hawaii?***

Should your death occur on the US Mainland, Canada, or Puerto Rico, the nearest medical school may accept your donation to a Willed Body Program as stated by the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act. You should notify your Next-of-Kin (NOK) or responsible person if you desire this option. *If you are adamant to donate to JABSOM WBP, please contact us as soon as possible for important instructions.* The donated body must be prepared for shipment to Oahu by a mortuary. Thus, the family or the estate must cover mortuary and airport transportation costs to Honolulu. As prices may vary, we recommend all our Donors contact their local mortuaries for the current price listings. Once the Donor has arrived at the Honolulu Airport, we will arrange transportation to the School of Medicine.

***Does the WBP accept monetary donations from Donors or their family and friends?***

Yes. The WBP is appreciative of tax-deductible donations. Family and friends of Donors wishing to make a monetary donation in memory of their loved one may make a donation to the Willed Body Program via UH Foundation. For further information, please call 808-692-1445 or email [wbdonor@hawaii.edu](mailto:wbdonor@hawaii.edu).

***Do you help with an Obituary Notice?***

The WBP can submit a free basic Obituary Notice on your behalf to the Honolulu Star-Advertiser (HSA). A template from the HSA will be provided to you. However, if family would like something more in depth, then they may do so by contacting the Honolulu Star-Advertiser's Legal Ads Department directly at 808-529-4344. We can also verify your death for your loved ones with other newspaper organizations if needed.

***How is a Death Certificate processed?***

Your physician, the WBP, and DOH work together to complete the Death Certificate. It is very important that the information provided on the original Anatomical Gift Donation Form and the Update Form is accurate. Incorrect information will cause a delay in the processing of the certificate. The WBP does **NOT** provide certified copies of your Death Certificates, these must be purchased directly from the DOH. We will notify the Next-of-Kin (NOK), or designated provider when the certificate is complete, and we will share information on how to obtain certified copies of your Death Certificate.

***Do you still have questions?***

We are happy to help you. Please give us a call at 808-692-1445 between the hours of 8:00am and 4:30pm, HST, Monday through Friday. If you call outside of our department hours, on weekends, or State Holidays, we will return your call as soon as possible.

**Thank you!**  
**The Willed Body Program Staff**