

Montana Body Donation Program

Each year many Montana residents make extraordinary gifts by donating their bodies to medical education. The Montana Body Donation Program at Montana State University recognizes the value and importance of anatomical donations in the training of future physicians and health professionals. The Montana Body Donation is committed to ensuring that donations are treated with great care and respect. As you consider the option of donating your body to medical education, know that the need is great and your gift will be honored and valued. Your donation will play a critical role in helping students master the complex anatomy of the human body and will provide medical students and other health professions' trainees with essential knowledge and tools that will benefit patients now and in the future.

Your decision to consider leaving your body for use in medical teaching has probably been thought through very carefully and you have definite convictions in favor of doing so, based upon your own good reasons and logic. At an appropriate time, you should discuss your decision frankly with your next of kin. It is important to have next of kin agree to the bequest.

How does one donate to the Montana Body Donation Program?

The bequest procedure for donating your body to medical education is relatively simple. Fill out a **Declaration of Consent Form** stating that your entire body shall go to a medical school or health-professional training program for use in medical education. A Declaration of Consent Form may be obtained by calling our office or by visiting <http://www.montana.edu/mbdp>.

At the time of death the next of kin should contact a funeral director and notify him or her that the body is willed to our program. They should ask the funeral director to call us at 406-994-6516 and we will provide him or her with specific instructions related to our needs.

What will a donated body be used for?

The majority of the donated remains are used for teaching anatomy to our medical students in the WWAMI Medical Education Program. Donations are utilized by other health professions education programs as well. All affiliated health sciences programs maintain the same high ethical standards for the care and use of donations established by the Montana Body Donation Program.

What is the final disposition of a body donated to the Montana Body Donation Program?

After use, generally one to five years after death, the Montana Body Donation Program arranges for final disposition of the remains as indicated by the donor on the Declaration of Consent form, at no expense to the donor's estate or next of kin. The remains may be cremated and returned to the designated next of kin or buried in a shared plot and coffin, without a named stone, in the Sunset Hills Cemetery here in Bozeman. The remains may also be buried without cremation in the same manner.

What if a donor is also an organ donor?

First priority is given to organ transplants. Except in the case of cornea donation, the Montana Body Donation Program cannot use the rest of the body

following organ donation. However, if circumstances were not favorable for organ donation at death, we could use the complete body.

Are there circumstances where a donation may be declined?

The Montana Body Donation Program may occasionally decline to accept a body donation, so individuals should have alternative plans. Regrettably, some medical conditions or other circumstances around the time of death preclude use of a body in medical education. Therefore, the final decision to accept the donation of a body can only be made at the time of death. It is important that the next of kin know we are not always able to accept a donation, and is aware of the donor's alternative disposition plans.

Can a donation be rescinded if the donor changes their mind?

If a donor changes his or her mind, the Declaration of Consent may be revoked in writing, by an oral statement to the attending physician during a terminal illness, or by a written statement carried by the donor. Please contact the Montana Body Donation Program if you wish to change or revoke your Declaration of Consent.

Is a memorial service conducted?

Yes, each medical student class conducts an annual memorial service to honor donors and express gratitude for their gift.

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Is there a cost for donating your body?

The Montana Body Donation Program provides a fixed amount to the funeral home to help compensate for the cost of initial transportation and primary preservation of the body. There may be other costs the family will have to pay, depending on the individual funeral home and location. If a donor passes more than 250 road miles from Bozeman the estate or next of kin may have to pay additional transportation costs. Please contact your local funeral home if you have questions in this regard and to determine what other charges, if any, might remain for the family.

If you have any questions or need additional consent forms please contact:

Cassie Cusick, Ph.D.

Program Director, Body Donation Program

Molly Hopkins, B.S.

Program Manager, Body Donation Program

Sydnee McKee, B.S.

Program Coordinator, Body Donation Program

Montana Body Donation Program

Montana State University

937 Highland Blvd, Ste 5220

Bozeman, MT 59715

Telephone: (406) 994-6516

Fax: (406) 994-4398

wwamiaid@montana.edu



*Supporting the Montana WWAMI
Medical Education Program at
Montana State University and Health
Science Education Programs
throughout Montana*