



## THE ETHICS OF ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION

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# The Ethics of Organ Transplantation

*With*

**Jan Jekielek**

Epoch Times Senior Editor, host of American Thought Leaders, and NYT bestselling author of "Killed to Order"

# The Testimony of Dr. Jacob Lavee

"In 2005, one of my patients was told by his medical insurance company to go to China in **two weeks' time** as he was **scheduled to undergo heart transplantation on a specific date.**

...The patient, indeed, went to China and underwent the operation on the **exact date as promised** ahead of time."



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Former Israel Transplantation Society President  
and Director of the Heart Transplantation Unit  
at Sheba Medical Center

# Hippocratic vs. Utilitarian Medical Ethics



# Two Opposing Frameworks

## Hippocratic Ethics

Rooted in the 5th-4th century BC, this framework focuses on the **individual patient** and the number one priority is to **"first, do no harm."**

## Utilitarian Ethics

A modern derivation focusing on the "greatest happiness" or utility or welfare for the largest number of people in society. Priority is **"greatest good for the greatest number."**

# Ethical Organ Transplantation



# Ethical Organ Transplantation

**Verified death:** Clear cardiovascular or brain death definitions.

**Voluntary, Informed Consent:** Opt-in or verified proxy authorization.

**Dead Donor Rule (DDR):** Donors must be dead before removal begins.

**Independent organ procurement organizations (OPOs):** Manage the entire process and are separate from transplant centers to reduce conflicts of interest.

# Defining the "Moment of Death"

## Cardiovascular Death

The irreversible cessation of circulatory and respiratory functions. This is the traditional definition used for centuries in clinical practice.

## Neurological Death

The irreversible cessation of all functions of the entire brain, including the brainstem.  
Requires rigorous testing and peer-reviewed protocols.

**Compromising these definitions for "utility" leads to ethical revisionism.**

# Ethical Organ Transplantation

The Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network's Key Principles:

1. Fairness and Transparency
2. Objectivity
3. Ethical Foundation

The “Final Rule” <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK224637/>.

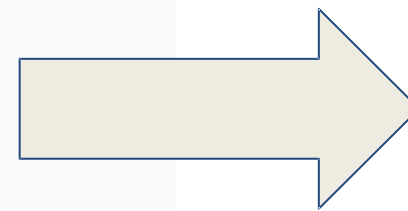
# The Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN)

## Classification-Based

### 3 General Requirements:

1. Geographic proximity to donor hospital
2. Medical Urgency Status
3. Compatibility

Placed in a rigid “tier” or “class” group based on how one meets the requirements.



## Continuous Distribution

### 3 General Requirements:

1. Composite Allocation Score (CAS)
  2. Weighted Patient Attributes
  3. Efficiency and Access Measures
- Eliminates rigid tiers and gives each patient a unique CAS based on all factors.

Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) OPTN policies: [https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/optn/optn\\_policies.pdf](https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/optn/optn_policies.pdf).

# | The Ethics of Living Donation: Kidneys

- 1 Voluntary, informed consent:** Donors must be fully aware of risks.
- 2 Medical safety:** Donation must not pose unacceptable risk. Donors undergo extensive medical and psychosocial evaluation.
- 3 No payment:** Commercial transactions in organs are illegal in America and other countries

# Ethical Violations

**The scarcity of organs—the "gap" between supply and demand—creates a vacuum often filled by exploitation.**

- 1 Queue jumping:** “Multi-listing” at different transplant centers or wealthy/influential individuals being prioritized
- 2 Black markets & organ trafficking:** In some countries, vulnerable individuals will be enticed, coerced, or tricked into giving up their kidneys to wealthy foreigners and others in black market systems. Iran is the only countries with a “legal,” state-regulated market for kidneys.

Falsified Test Results

## Organ Transplant Scandal Shocks Germany

Germany's healthcare system is highly respected around the world, but a growing scandal over organ transplant fraud has sparked a fierce debate over medical ethics in the country. A doctor is suspected of tampering with his patients' records to push them to the top of the transplant list.

03.08.2012, 11.34 Uhr





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# The Testimony of Dr. Franz Immer

"During my visit in Beijing in 2007, a hospital invited us to watch a heart transplantation operation. **The organizer asked us whether we would like to have the transplantation operation in the morning or in the afternoon. This means that the donor would die, or be killed at a given time, at the convenience of the visitors.** I refused to participate."



**Dr. Franz Immer**

Chair of the Swiss National Foundation for  
Organ Donation and Transplantation

# The Testimony of Mr. HX

Mr. HX, a patient with chronic renal insufficiency planned to go to China hoping for a kidney transplant. A dialysis caregiver introduced HX to a broker.

In a span of just two weeks, they found four kidney matches, but each time, when the kidney was delivered, antibody crossmatching tests came back positive, so the operations had to be canceled.

On Mr. HX's second trip to China, four more kidneys were tested.

The surgery was finally done with the **eighth kidney** on April 23, 2004.

The doctor in charge told him the kidney came from an executed prisoner who had not given consent.

# Official Advertisements of Short Wait Times

The screenshot shows the website for the Oriental Organ Transplant Center (OOC). The browser address bar indicates the page is from a web archive dated 2006. The website features a navigation menu with links for Mailbox, Sitemap, Contact Us, English, and Guestbook. The main header displays the center's name in Chinese and English: 东方器官移植中心 / ORIENT ORGAN TRANSPLANT CENTER. Below this is a secondary menu with links for Home, About Us, Elite Team, Medical Insurance, Patient Interaction, Academic Exchange, Data Statistics, and Pathology Laboratory.

On the left side, contact information is provided for the liver transplant director (朱主任), kidney transplant director (王主任), and a resident consultant (薛主任). The central section, titled "中心简介 ABOUT US", includes a photograph of the center's building and a paragraph describing it as the largest organ transplant center in Asia, serving as the origin for clinical liver transplantation in China. To the right, a line graph titled "Our Achievements" (我们的成果) shows a significant increase in transplant surgeries over time. A red circle highlights the data for 2005, which is not explicitly labeled on the graph but corresponds to the text below.

Year	Number of Surgeries
1998年前	9
1999年	33
2000年	111
2001年	240
2002年	512
2003年	801
2004年	1,601

Below the graph, a news snippet states: "Since January 2005, a total of 647 orthotopic liver transplant surgeries have been completed; 12 were completed this week; the average waiting time for patients is two weeks." The Chinese text above it reads: "2005年1月至今共完成原位肝移植手术647例;本周完成12例;病人平均等待时间为两周。"

At the bottom of the page, there are login fields for "用户名" (username) and "密码" (password), along with buttons for "登陆" (login), "修改密码" (change password), "医生注册" (doctor registration), and "患者咨询" (patient consultation). A news link is also visible: "[院内新闻] 沈中阳教授受邀老布什总统在京活动".

# Official Advertisements of Organ Transplant Prices

## The Cost of The Transplantation

The cost of an organ **transplantation** in China can be seen in the table, and is acceptable for waged persons.

The actual cost many vary according to the condition of the patient. Please see the expense table.

item	expense
kidney transplant	US\$62,000
liver transplant	US\$98,000~130,000
liver-kidney transplant	US\$160,000~180,000
kindey-pancreas transplant	US\$150,000
lung transplant	US\$150,000~170,000
heart transplant	US\$130,000~160,000
cornea transplant	US\$30,000

Source: China International Transplantation Network Assistance Centre Website (Shenyang City). Archived here: <http://archive.edoors.com/render.php?uri=http%3A%2F%2Fen.zoukiishoku.com%2Flist%2Fcost.htm+%&x=16&y=11>



# The 2019 China Tribunal



“Forced organ harvesting has been committed for years throughout China on a significant scale and that Falun Gong practitioners have been one – and probably the main – source of organ supply.”

# The First Known Survivor: Peiming Cheng



# The First Known Survivor: Peiming Cheng



A Falun Gong practitioner, he was imprisoned for his faith in 2002. He was forced to undergo surgery in Nov. 2004.

He woke up with a massive 14-inch gash across his side.

Later scans confirmed he is missing parts of his liver and half of the left lower lobe of his lung.

# 'Execution by Organ Procurement' (2022 Paper)

American Journal of  
TRANSPLANTATION

Execution by organ procurement: Breaching the dead donor rule in China

[Matthew P. Robertson](#)<sup>1</sup> · [Jacob Lavee](#) <sup>2</sup> 

We have documented **71 descriptions of problematic brain death declaration prior to heart and lung procurement. From these reports, we infer that violations of the DDR took place:** given that the donors could not have been brain dead before organ procurement, the declaration of brain death could not have been medically sound. It follows that in these cases death must have been caused by the surgeons procuring the organ.



# A Revealing Obituary for Former Chinese Deputy Cultural Minister Gao Zhanxiang (Died at 87)

朱永新：沉痛悼念高占祥部长

原创 镜堂 镜堂 2022-12-11 20:19 发表于北京



高占祥先生

沉痛悼念高占祥部长

文/朱永新

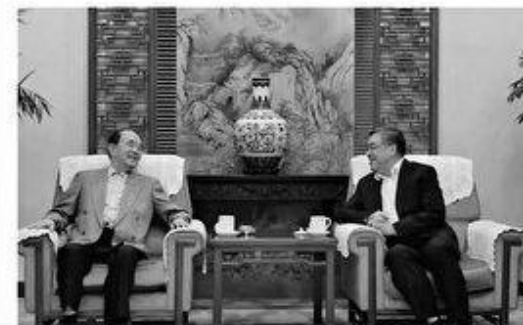
在活动仪式前，高占祥部长专门和我进行了比较深入的交流，给我介绍了他与池田大作对话教育的故事，讲述了他对于教育问题的看法。他非常赞赏新教育实验的理念，欣然为我们书写了新教育的核心理念“过一种幸福完整的教育生活”。

高占祥部长在住院期间读到了我的新书《未来学校》，给予了很高评价，竖起大拇指连声叫“好好好！”，认为它把握了未来教育的趋势，中国应

拷贝 全选 查询 翻译 搜索网页 >

这些年来，高占祥一直在顽强地与病魔作斗争，身上的脏器换了好多，他戏称许多零件都不是自己的了。但是，疫情前的他仍然精神矍铄、思维敏捷、声音洪亮，完全不像一个病人。没有想到，这么快就离开我们了。

敬爱的高占祥部长，您永远活在我们心中！



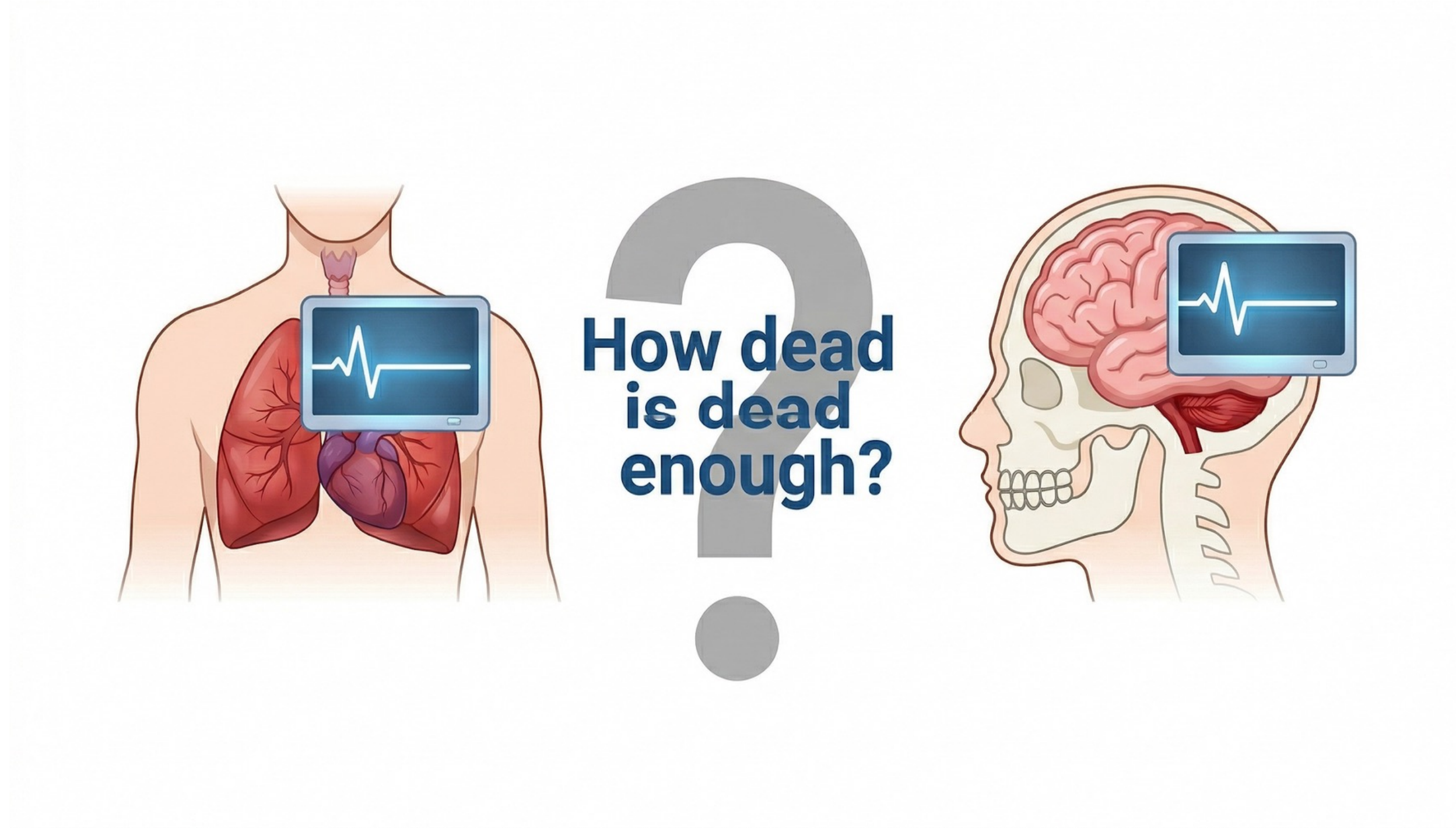
“Over the years, Gao Zhanxiang waged a tenacious battle against illness; having undergone numerous organ transplants, he would jokingly remark that **many of his 'parts' were no longer his own.**”

- *Written by Zhu Yongxin, deputy secretary general of the 12th Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (The Party's top political advisory body)*

# Statement by the International Society for Heart and Lung Transplantations (ISHLT)

“Given the body of evidence that the government of the People’s Republic of China stands alone in continuing to systematically support the procurement of organs or tissue from executed prisoners, submissions related to transplantation and involving either organs or tissue from human donors in the People’s Republic of China will not be accepted by ISHLT.”

# A Debate Over Death



# HHS Finds Systemic Disregard for Sanctity of Life in Organ Transplant System

*Secretary Kennedy Threatens Closure of Deficient Organ Procurement Organization*

**WASHINGTON—July 21, 2025—** The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under the leadership of Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. today announced a major initiative to begin reforming the organ transplant system following an investigation by its Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) that revealed disturbing practices by a major organ procurement organization.

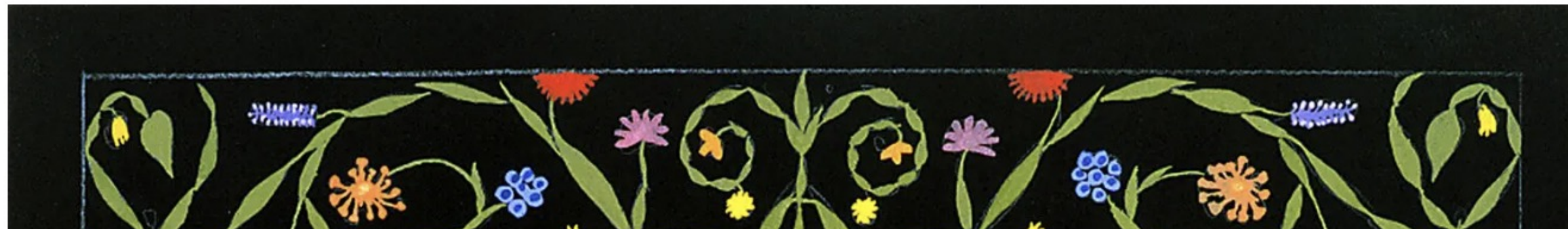
“Our findings show that hospitals allowed the organ procurement process to begin when patients showed signs of life, and this is horrifying,” **Secretary Kennedy said.** “The organ procurement organizations that coordinate access to transplants will be held accountable. The entire system must be fixed to ensure that every potential donor’s life is treated with the sanctity it deserves.”

# The New York Times

**OPINION**  
**GUEST ESSAY**

# Donor Organs Are Too Rare. We Need a New Definition of Death.

July 30, 2025



OPINION > COMMENTARY

## It's time for America to cut transplant ties with China | GUEST COMMENTARY



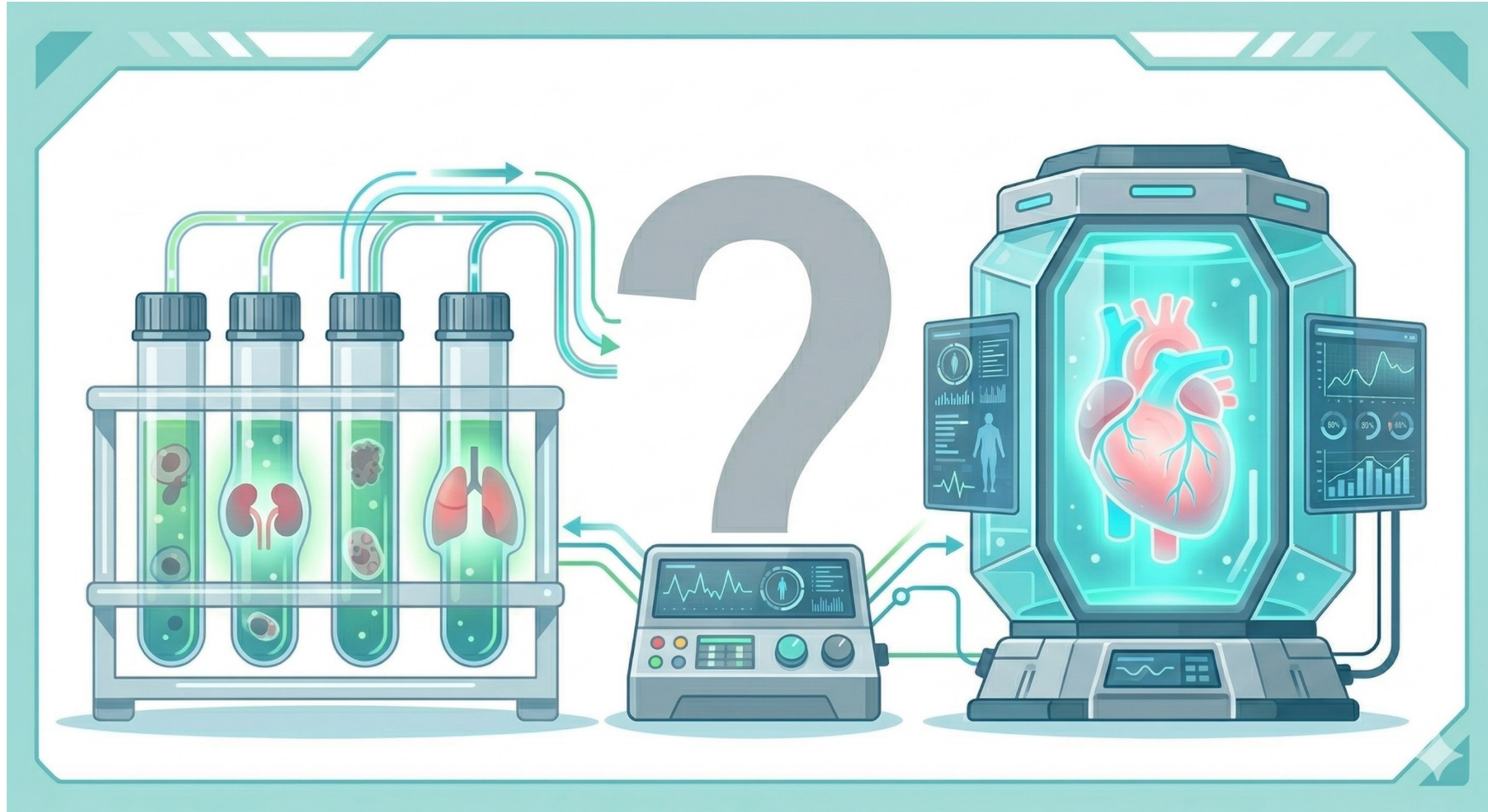
Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. (Jacquelyn Martin/AP)



By **JAN JEKIELEK**

PUBLISHED: November 2, 2025 at 12:49 PM EST | UPDATED: November 2, 2025 at 9:46 PM EST

# Looking To The Future





AMERICAS

# Canada Leads World in Organ Donations from Euthanasia

By Craig McCulloch

January 22, 2023 3:29 AM

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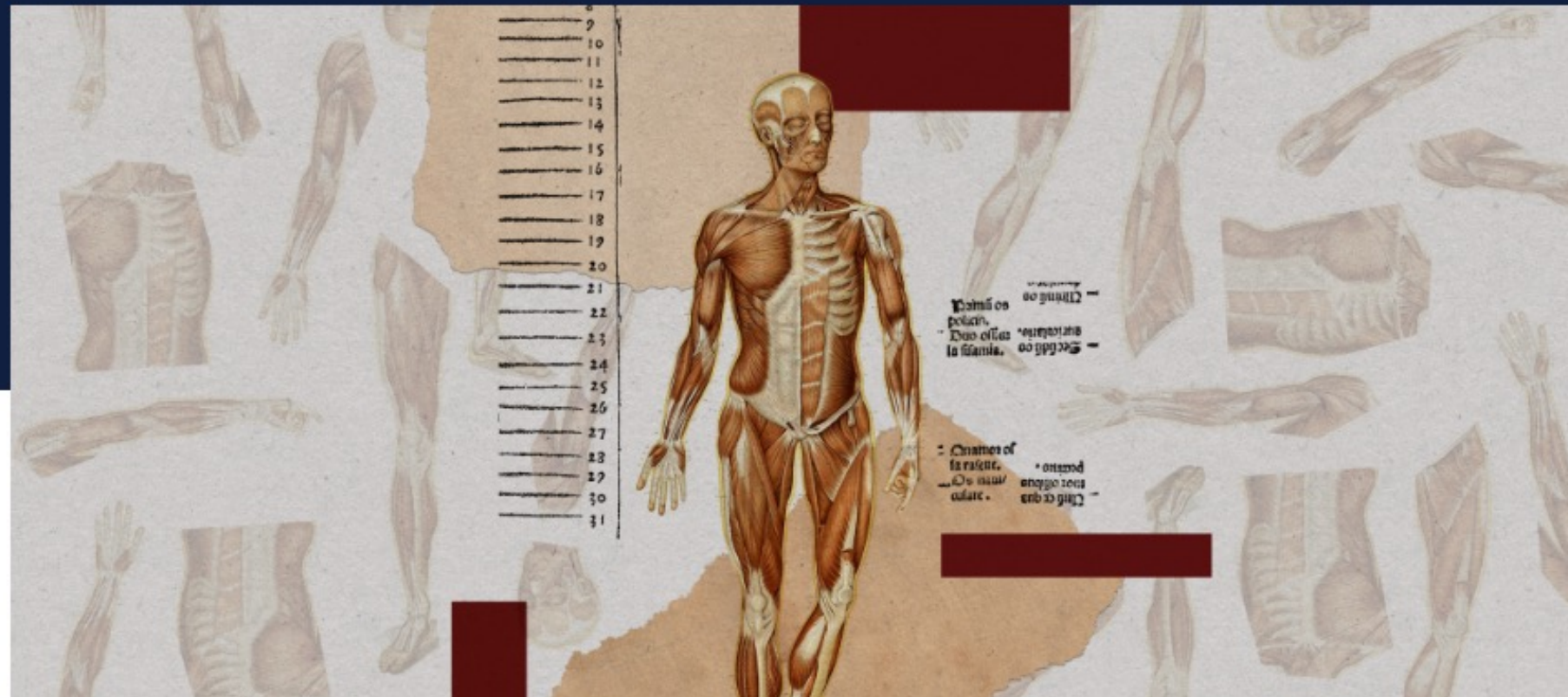
OPINION

# Ethically sourced “spare” human bodies could revolutionize medicine

Human “bodyoids” could reduce animal testing, improve drug development, and alleviate organ shortages.

By Carsten T. Charlesworth, Henry T. Greely, & Hiromitsu Nakauchi

March 25, 2025



# | Future Solutions?

- 1 Xenotransplantation:** There's been preliminary success in recent years in genetically modifying pig organs and transplanting them for humans.
- 2 Organoids:** Tiny, lab-grown versions of organs. There's also a push for bio-printing, 3D printing organs using a patient's own cells.
- 3 Artificial organs:** Advancements in mechanical hearts (VADs) and wearable artificial kidneys suggest these may also become a viable path forward to deal with organ shortages.

# Thank you

For more medical education visit  
[www.IMAhealth.org](http://www.IMAhealth.org)

