



TRANSPLANT INSTITUTE
Henry Ford Hospital & Medical Centers

Marwan S. Abouljoud, M.D. May 18, 2021

Director
Benson Ford Chair

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Kidney
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Pancreas
(313) 916-1590
(313) 916-7587 fax

Heart
(313) 916-2895
(313) 916-8799 fax

Lung
(313) 916-1258
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Bone Marrow
(313) 916-5002
(313) 916-7911 fax

Hepatobiliary Surgery
(313) 916-7574
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Representative Bronna Kahle
Chair, Health Policy Committee
Anderson House Office Building
N-991 House Office Building
Lansing, MI 48933

Re: Increasing organ transplants in Michigan via the HOPE Act

Dear Chair Kahle and members of the Health Policy Committee,

I am writing to voice my strong support for changes to the Michigan Public Health Code that will increase the number of lives saved in our state by allowing our medical centers to transplant organs in accordance with the federal HIV Organ Policy Equity Act, or HOPE Act. This federal legislation allows organs from HIV-positive donors to be transplanted into recipients who are also HIV-positive.

In the State of Michigan, transplant centers have been reluctant to consider organs from deceased donors who are HIV-positive and offering them to HIV-positive recipients under the federal HOPE Act. This is so because of the Michigan Public Health Code that has not been amended to be in line with current practice and the federal HOPE Act that was signed into law November 21, 2013. In the context of organ transplantation, these patients are missing opportunities at lifesaving transplants. Furthermore, organ demand for lifesaving transplants continues to outstrip the demand, which has been worse in the Covid era.

In Michigan, all transplant centers work collaboratively and with Gift of Life Michigan, the state's only organ and tissue donation program. Gift of Life Michigan already recovers organs from HIV-positive donors under the HOPE Act. But because of outdated language in the Public Health Code, those organs are sent out of state instead of saving patient lives here, in Michigan. The legislation before you would remove that restriction on transplanting these organs into Michigan patients, bring the state into line with federal law, increase efficiency and give hope to the more than 2,500 residents waiting for this life-saving gift. The Gift of Life Michigan Governing Board and Advisory Board – including representatives of the state's nine organ transplant programs – endorse this effort to boost the number of organs for transplant for their patients. In addition, the Henry Ford Transplant Institute, the most comprehensive transplant center in the State, strongly supports amending the Public Health Code in Michigan as noted above.

Representative Bronna Kahle

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Page Two

Re: Increasing organ transplants in Michigan via the HOPE Act

I am currently the President of the American Society of Transplant Surgeons, the largest organization representing the voice of transplant surgeons in the United States. The Society stands behind the HOPE Act and was one of the organizations that helped define the need and the opportunity through science and data back in 2011. A multilateral and multi stakeholder effort that included transplant professional organizations and patient groups collaboratively supported this bill and helped inform the legislature about this opportunity. I am grateful and appreciative for your attention to this matter and am happy to address any questions you may have. You may reach me at maboulj5@hfhs.org or (313) 916-2941.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marwan Abouljoud', written in a cursive style.

Marwan S. Abouljoud, MD, FACS, CPE, MMM
President, American Society of Transplant Surgeons
Benson Ford Chair in Transplantation
Director, Transplant Institute and Hepatobiliary Surgery
Professor, Clinician-Educator
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