

Kidney recipients could be picked by age

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Younger people in need of kidney transplants would get organs before older people under a controversial proposal announced in Houston.

The proposal from the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network is aimed at giving transplants to people who would live the longest with their new kidneys, the Chicago Tribune reported Friday.

The proposal could still change, and the earliest it could take effect is December, the newspaper said.

Not everyone saw the proposal as fair.

"I don't have problems with trying to maximize this valuable resource, kidneys, which are in such short supply today," Jack Fassnacht, a 51-year-old Chicago lawyer with polycystic kidney disease who has had two transplants, told the Tribune. "But I don't like the idea of suggesting the life of a 30-something has more value than the life of a 50-something. That just doesn't seem fair to me."

Dr. Michael Abecassis, chief of organ transplantation at Northwestern's Feinberg School of Medicine said the policy risks undermining public trust in the organ donation system, which could result in fewer organ donations, the report said.

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