

New organ donor law raise ethics concerns

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A model law updating U.S. organ donation procedures that is being circulated among states is raising ethics concerns about dying patients' rights and wishes.

The Revised Uniform Anatomical Gift Act updates 1968 legislation that was adopted by every state to make organ donation procedures uniform, and the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws issued the revision.

Among changes to the 1968 version is that the law is emphatic a person's decision to be an organ donor cannot be revoked by anyone else, but expands the list of people who can consent to an unconscious patient becoming a donor, the Washington Post reported.

Critics are concerned the law could make doctors more reluctant to administer morphine or other drugs to a dying person for fear making their organs unusable.

"My concern is that the dying patient is going to be neglected or even harmed for the benefit of someone else," said Gail Van Norman, a professor of anesthesiology and bioethics at the University of Washington in Seattle.

Virginia, Idaho, Utah and South Dakota have adopted the new bill and it is awaiting governors' signatures in Arkansas, Indiana, Iowa and New Mexico, the Post said.

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