

Ireland Implements Opt-Out Organ Donation System

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In an effort to enhance organ availability for transplantation, Ireland implemented its opt-out organ donation system in June 2025. As per the Part 2 of the Human Tissue Act (HTA) 2024, all individuals over the age of 18 will be automatically considered to have consented to organ donation unless they actively opt out.

However, as before, family consent will still be required for organ donation. The legislation will formalize the concept of a “designated family member” and establish a clear hierarchy among next-of-kin. At the time of death, a member of this designated hierarchy will be approached by the medical team to provide consent for organ donation.

This change places Ireland in the same category as other European Union Nations that operate on the presumed consent basis. The system also allows for non-directed altruistic living donation and ensures an oversight panel for ethical and transparent governance. The Health Service Executive (HSE)

will be responsible for maintaining the Opt-Out Register and providing national oversight to ensure compliance. Early evidence suggests favorable attitudes from the public. With around 600 patients waiting for transplants, the policy is expected to not only boost the number of organ donations but also deepen research trials focussed on organ preservation, immune tolerance, and paediatric transplantation.

The new policy change is a significant milestone in Ireland's organ donation system - enhancing evidence-based transplant practice while still being compliant with donor autonomy and ethical safeguards.

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