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Dec. 19, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The Association of Organ Procurement Organizations (AOPO) welcomes and supports efforts to improve the transportation of donated organs through collaboration with the Department of Transportation (DOT) and federal entities. AOPO is the national representative of 49 Organ Procurement Organizations (OPOs), the federally designated non-profits responsible for facilitating the organ donation process, including the transportation of transplant organs to waiting recipients.

After organs are recovered from donors, there are mere hours to transplant them before they are no longer viable. OPOs are tasked with determining the safest and most efficient ways to transport organs. While transportation incidents are rare, it is important to address challenges and identify opportunities to improve the current process.

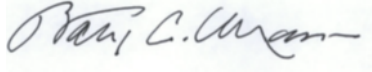
Post 9/11, Homeland Security now requires organs to travel as cargo when transported by commercial air, significantly extending the length of time to transfer an organ between donor hospital and transplant center. These restrictions place a logistical strain on how far and how often organs can be transported.

Work is already underway to help improve transportation. OPOs are collaborating with companies offering organ tracking technology, which has helped improve transportation logistics and efficiencies between donor hospitals and transplant centers. OPOs are also partnering with companies to expedite air and ground transportation of organs.

Undoubtedly, additional tools and regulations from the DOT, Federal Aviation Agency (FAA), Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) will help ensure organs reach patients faster. Recently, the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) reached out to you regarding this important issue. We urge you to meet with representatives from UNOS to discuss ways the DOT can help.

We stand ready to work with stakeholders to advance the transportation of transplant organs and maximize the gift of life.

Sincerely,



Barry Massa
President
Association of Organ Procurement Organizations (AOPO)

Cc:

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