**Virginia State Anatomical Program**Virginia Department of Health
400 East Jackson Street
Richmond, VA 23219
P: (804) 786-2479 F: (804) 225-3896



 **DONATING YOUR BODY TO THE VIRGINIA STATE ANATOMICAL PROGRAM (VSAP)**

Established in 1919, VSAP is the only entity legally authorized to receive donations of human bodies for scientific study in the Commonwealth of Virginia. VSAP is an agency of the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and assists the VDH’s goal of “Becoming the Healthiest State in the Nation” by providing human donors for the teaching of anatomy and surgical procedures to healthcare professionals in educational facilities located within the Commonwealth and for the advancement of medical and scientific research.

VSAP recognizes the impact, significance and lasting contribution the gift of donating one’s body to our program. It is due to these gifts that VSAP desires to handle all donated individuals and their families with great respect and with high ethical standards.

Over 400 donors are accepted yearly. These donors are placed at one of 6 medical schools and other healthcare programs at various universities and community colleges within the Commonwealth. The use of human donors is recognized as a very important and integral part of the education of healthcare professionals by providing “hands-on” experiences that cannot be replicated by the use of a mannequin or a computer program. This fact along with the increase in the number of programs in the Commonwealth has increased the number of human donors needed on a yearly basis, which exceeds the numbers accepted. Additionally, Some donor’s may satisfy certain criteria, such as age, height, weight and standards, which may allow them to potentially be placed with a surgical, medical or biomechanical research programs located at a medical and/or university within the Commonwealth with additional authorizations from the next of kin.

Not every person who wishes to donate is accepted by VSAP at the time of their death. Certain criteria such as height/weight, presence of contagious diseases, extensive trauma, recent extensive surgical procedures, jaundice, severe edema, contraction of the body and the time between death and the reporting of the death to VSAP make the study of the human donor difficult. This criteria is reviewed with individuals providing healthcare for the potential donor after death and if not accepted by VSAP, the donor’s family or responsible party should have alternate plans.

We encourage all perspective donors to discuss their wishes with their families. In many cases the donor has expressed their wishes to VSAP by completing and submitting the Dedication Form but their wishes were never carried out because the family never reported the death or assumed it was an automatic process. Potential donors should contact or complete prearrangements with a local funeral home as VSAP is not responsible for any charges associated with the disposition of a donor that is not accepted.

There are no direct costs associated with the donation to our program. However there are indirect costs such as securing certified copies of the Death Certificate ($12.00 directly to Division of Vital Records) and funeral home costs (varied) if a funeral home is needed to transport from the place of death to the funeral home to be placed into refrigeration while the determination for acceptance is being made.

To donate to VSAP there are two processes: Completion and submission of the Dedication Form (form 1) and/or authorization by next of kin or responsible party after death. In both situations, authorization of Next of Kin or Responsible Party is required after death for acceptance. Completion and submission of the Dedication Form is not required for acceptance.

**If you are the potential donor:** By completing and submitting the Dedication Form, you are expressing your wishes to donate your body after death to our program:

* It is your wish to donate your body to the Virginia State Anatomical Program for the advancement of medical education and scientific research.
* Your agent, representative from healthcare facility or funeral home will notify VSAP as soon as possible to review medical information for acceptance and receive proper authorizations.
* Authorization for donation by Next of Kin/responsible party will still be required.

**If you are donating someone else’s body:**

* It is your wish to donate their body to the Virginia State Anatomical Program for the advancement of medical education and scientific research.
* You are acting as the potential donor’s agent, representative from healthcare facility or funeral home and should notify VSAP as soon as possible after the death of the potential donor to review medical information for acceptance and receive proper authorizations.
* You as an agent, representative from healthcare facility or funeral home will notify VSAP as soon as possible after the death of the potential donor to review medical information for acceptance and receive proper authorizations

If you have any questions, please contact our offices at (804) 786-2479, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If no one is available please leave a message and we will return your call the next business day.

Thank you for considering donation to VSAP. Your gift and contribution to medical science is sincerely appreciated.