Spoke With Rabbi Feinstein

Tuesday, December 21, 2010
Frank J. Veith

Although I am not Jewish, I met with Rabbi Moshe Feinstein in 1976 to discuss brain death and organ donation with him ("RCA Backs Off Stand On Brain Death For Transplants," Dec. 3). He told me that brain death was death according to the Talmud, and I reported his opinion in an article I wrote that was published on Oct. 10, 1977 in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

It is a pity the RCA’s document omitted mentioning my testimony that appears in video form on the website of the Halachic Organ Donor Society (www.hods.org).

More than 7,000 Americans die every year on the waiting list for organs. It will be a tragedy if the efforts of the RCA cause more Americans to die. Moreover, I am shocked that the RCA rabbis concluded that brain-dead people are alive so Jews should not donate organs, but they don’t mind Jews taking critical organs from other non-Jewish people like me who are dying “anyway.”

Professor of Surgery
New York University Medical Center