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Hands holding green organ transplant awareness ribbon (illustrative)..(Photo by: INGIMAGE)

Modern Orthodox rabbis endorse organ donation as a mitzva

By JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH
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New ADI donor card issued to encourage religious to take part

Leading Modern Orthodox rabbis have issued, for the first time, a strong endorsement of organ donation as a mitzva (positive commandment), inducing Israel Transplant to issue an ADI card and assemble a group of rabbis ready to advise families in the event of lower- brain death.

The card is aimed at National Religious and Zionist Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) sectors, some of whom have been reluctant to donate organs for transplant. In Israel, Haredi rabbis insist that the heart stops before organs are removed, instead of a cessation of breathing.

However, many Haredi rabbis abroad do accept lower-brain death as a prerequisite for organ donation.

If organs are removed after the heart stops, most are no longer viable for transplant.

The ADI states that the law sets down the process for determining a donor's death according to Halacha. In addition, a follow-up and supervision committee of rabbis will ensure that the decision to remove organs is carried out according to the law.

The family will be entitled to receive the medical file containing the determination of death for consulting with a rabbi or an independent physician.

These conditions have satisfied the Chief Rabbinate and other leading rabbis, Israel Transplant said.

The religious leaders who endorsed the new conditions for transplant and the card include: Saged Chief Rabbi Shmuel Eliahu, Ramat Gan Chief Rabbi Ya'acov Ariel, Puah Institute head Rabbi Menachem Burstein, Rabbi Avi Gisser of Ofra, Or Etzion Yeshiva head Rabbi Haim Druckman,

Kiryat Shmona Chief Rabbi Zefania Drori, Kiryat Arba Chief Rabbi Dov Lior, Har Bracha Rabbi Eliezer Melamed, Shoham Chief Rabbi David Stav, Har Nof communal rabbi Rafi Feuerstein, Har Hamor Yeshiva Rabbi Yehoshua Zuckerman, Ma'aleh Adumim Yeshiva Rabbi Nahum Rabinowitz, former IDF Chief Rabbi Avihai Ronsky, Jerusalem Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Arye Stern and Orot Shaul Yeshiva Rabbi Yuval Cherlow.

The organ donation card can be obtained by contacting ADI at *6262 or www.adi.gov.il.



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