



<http://www.med.und.edu/anatomy/deeded-body-program.cfm>

Answers to your questions about

The University of North Dakota  
School of Medicine & Health Sciences

## Deeded Body Program

Administered through  
The University of North Dakota  
School of Medicine & Health Sciences  
Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology



*How you may help medical science create a  
heritage of better health and a longer, happier life  
for this generation and the generations to follow.*

*Please read carefully before completing forms.*

**Q Why are human bodies donated to the University of North Dakota School of Medicine & Health Sciences (UNDSMHS) Deeded Body Program?**

A Quite simply, because they are indispensable in health sciences education. Anatomy is a fundamental science, learned best through diligent, detailed study of the human body. Without this type of study, doctors and health-care workers would have no hands-on training in human structure and the development of surgical and interventional techniques would be nearly impossible. Giving one's body after death for the betterment of humanity is a noble and commendable act that provides a valuable gift to generations yet unborn.

**Q Is this a normal and acceptable procedure?**

A Definitely, yes. Bequests and donations are made by socially responsible persons from all segments of the population. Students are very mindful of the generosity and the significant value of these important bequests. Everyone who enjoys the fullness of health does so at least partially as a result of previous body donations and is in the debt of the donors.

**Q Are there religious objections to bequeathing one's body to medical science?**

A The practice is approved and encouraged by Catholic, Protestant, and Reform Judaic religious leaders.

**Q Is there an urgent need for body bequests and donations?**

A The need at the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program is great and will be further increased by the demand for training more doctors, nurses, and other health care practitioners. A lack of anatomical subjects could cause a

cut back or suspension of vitally important teaching programs that would adversely affect the overall health and welfare of the population.

**Q Is bequeathing or deeding my body difficult or complicated?**

A No, it is a very simple and easy procedure. The UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program provides a Certificate For Bequeathing Body form that requires only a few items of information, the donor's signature, and the signature of two witnesses.

**Q What is the purpose of the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act?**

A The North Dakota Uniform Anatomical Gift Act relieves the next of kin of the burden of making a decision of this magnitude under the handicap of grief. It protects both the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program and survivors and greatly simplifies the procedure at the time of death.

**Q Must I be of legal age to sign a bequeathal form?**

A Yes. Bequeathal forms from persons who are not of legal age must be co-signed by a parent or legal guardian.

**Q May I alter, cancel, or revoke my bequeathal if I change my mind?**

A Yes. Simply notify the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program in writing of your decision.

**Q Will the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program pay me or my family for my body?**

A No. By law, the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program is not allowed to purchase a human body, either from you or your survivors.

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**Q Will this bequest create any expense for my estate or survivors?**

A The UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program typically reimburses a portion of the cost of a local funeral director's professional services and transportation charges. The UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program does pay for the cost of your cremation and local burial or return of your cremains.

**Q Will deeding my body to the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program jeopardize any insurance, Social Security, or pension benefits to which survivors may be entitled?**

A No. Payments of this type are based on proof of death, not on the final disposition of your body.

**Q Are the bodies of persons of advanced age acceptable?**

A Most assuredly. Advanced age in itself does not reduce the usefulness of the body for educational purposes.

**Q If I make prior arrangements to donate transplantable organs upon my death, or if an autopsy is performed, will my body still be suitable for study?**

A No. Removal of organs for transplant and/or an autopsy would render your body unsuitable for educational studies. In such cases, your body could not be accepted.

**Q Will my body be accepted for study if I am infected with HIV?**

A No. At the present time, it is the policy of the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program not to accept bodies with confirmed HIV, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, Hepatitis B, or Hepatitis C.

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**Q Is there a weight limit?**

A Yes. The weight limit is approximately 275 pounds. The UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program may refuse a donation due to incompatible body habitus.

**Q If I am a donor to the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program, what is the proper procedure at the time of my death?**

A Your family should contact a local funeral home and inform the director that you are enrolled in the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program. The Deeded Body Program will make the necessary transportation arrangements from the funeral home to the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program.

**Q Must my body be embalmed before it is sent to the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program?**

A Yes, but the funeral home designated by you or your family should contact the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program before doing so if the funeral home is not familiar with the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program embalming requirements.

**Q How long will my body be used for study?**

A This will vary according to specific educational needs at the time your body is donated. Typically, a two to three year interval occurs between the arrival of the body at the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program and its final disposition. In unusual cases the time required may be longer.

**Q What if my death occurs away from home?**

A All donors are provided with a Whole-Body Donor card indicating that a bequest has been made to the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program. This card should be carried with you at all times. You should note on the card the name of the person to be notified in the event of sudden or unexpected death.

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**Q What if my death occurs at a great distance from the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program?**

A In the event that your death should occur at a substantial distance from the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program, two possibilities exist: (1) the cost of transportation may be borne by your estate or your survivors; or (2) a clause may be checked on your Certificate for Bequeathing Body form that allows your next of kin to make an alternative donation arrangement.

**Q What if I should move to another state?**

A If the distance from the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program is excessive, your original bequeathal should be revoked and a substitute arrangement made with a medical school near your new home.

**Q Must I be a resident of North Dakota to bequeath my body to the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program?**

A No. Bequests are accepted from anyone regardless of their distance from the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program, provided that the cost of transportation will be assumed by the estate or survivors.

**Q How are the donors treated at the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program?**

A The donors entrusted to the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program are under constant supervision of instructional faculty and receive the same high degree of consideration and dignity they would be accorded in a funeral home. These generous contributions to the welfare of humanity are recognized, respected, and honored.

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**Q May a customary or traditional type of funeral service be held prior to transfer of my body to the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program?**

A Yes. It is the privilege of the family to decide whether there is to be a traditional funeral service with a casket and a body present or if a memorial service is to be held after your body has been sent to the UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program. However, in the event that a traditional funeral is to be held, it is important that the local funeral director be informed of your bequeathal to UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program before your body is delivered to the funeral home.

**Q What happens when the anatomical study of my body is concluded?**

A Your remains will be cremated with dignity and respect. If requested on the Certificate for Bequeathing Body form, your cremains will be returned to designated relatives or to a funeral home of your choice. If no such request is made, your cremains will be buried in our local UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program cemetery plot during an inter-denominational interment service held approximately every three years.

**Q If I require additional information, where may I obtain it?**

A UNDSMHS Deeded Body Program  
c/o Dept. of Anatomy and Cell Biology  
School of Medicine & Health Sciences  
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501 North Columbia Road Stop 9037  
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