Stanford Willed Body Program – Information for Donors

The decision to donate your body to Stanford upon your death represents a priceless gift to the world of education and a tremendous opportunity for the students who will one day be among our society’s most talented—and best trained—doctors and scientists. Thank you for considering making such a donation. For questions about our registration form or process please call 650-725-6624.

Below are some important details about the program.

How The Program Works
Once you register to become a donor to the Willed (Whole) Body Program, Stanford’s Division of Clinical Anatomy will keep your name and contact information on file. Upon your death, a caregiver or family member must contact us right away. We take calls 24 hours/day, every day of the year. We will arrange for a funeral home to transport your body to Stanford Medical School, where it may be used to teach students about the structure of the human body and for furthering medical and scientific knowledge.

Stanford can only transport bodies from within a 150-mile radius of the campus. If death occurs outside of a 150-mile radius of the campus, donor families may choose to transport the body to campus; however, the family must cover the cost of transportation themselves.

Once study of the body is complete, we will arrange for cremation. (The study period may range from one month to two years, but it is typically about a year in duration.) At the time of donation, your family will be asked whether they wish for the cremated remains to be returned or whether they would like us to arrange for interment. Our faculty, students, and staff are very grateful for the kindness our donors have extended, and bodies are treated with the greatest respect while in our care.

Does the program cost anything? Is a payment involved?
Donors do not receive payment for their participation in the program, nor are they charged for participating. Stanford covers the cost of transporting your body if death occurs within 150 miles of campus, as well as costs of cremation. A donor’s family incurs a cost only in unusual circumstances (e.g., to ship cremated remains if no family member is able to pick them up, or to make alternate arrangements if Stanford determines that it cannot accept the donation), or for transportation costs if death occurs more than 150 miles from campus.

Sometimes, a donor or family makes a monetary gift to support the costs of running the program, or encourages loved ones to make gifts. Such gifts are not required but are gratefully accepted.
What if I change my mind?
Registering for the program indicates your intent to be a donor. However, it is not a legally binding contract. If you change your mind, simply notify us and we will remove you from our registration list. It is important to tell your family and caregivers your wishes—they are the ones who must know whether to contact us upon your death. After your death, decisions regarding the donation of your remains are made by the person who has legal authority over your affairs.

Can I donate my body if I am also an organ donor?
Yes. In the case of eye donation, we can easily accept a body after the eyes have been removed. In some cases we can also accept a body after other organs have been donated (e.g. liver, heart, kidneys), as long as the body can be transported to us promptly. If too much time passes or other unusual circumstances occur, we may have to decline the body donation, in which case the family must be prepared to make other arrangements.

What are my family’s options for a funeral?
Because we must receive body donations promptly (within 12 hours of death), it is not possible for bodies to be embalmed elsewhere or to be present at a funeral or viewing. Of course, a memorial service may be held without the remains present. Also, families may request at the time of donation to have cremated remains returned some time later, as described previously. Some families choose to remember the deceased at this time as well.

Is there an age limit?
No, there is no upper age limit to donate your body.

Can Stanford decline my offer to donate?
Though we accept most body donations, in a small number of cases we are not able to accept a donation even when a donor has pre-registered. Stanford has the right to refuse a donation and may do so for a variety of reasons. For example, we are not able to accept bodies from those who have certain infectious diseases (e.g. hepatitis, tuberculosis, MRSA, VRE, Staph) or those who are HIV positive. If an autopsy has been performed on the body or if death occurred during major surgery, we cannot accept the donation. This is not a complete list—there may be other circumstances in which we cannot accept a body. Upon the death of a donor, a family member or caregiver must contact our program staff by phone. At that time, our staff will make a final determination as to whether the body can be accepted by our program. If, at our discretion, we are unable to accept your body, your family must make alternate arrangements for it. It is therefore a good idea to have a backup plan in place in case unforeseen circumstances prevent us from accepting your body donation.
Protecting Your Privacy
From the moment you register for our program, we make every effort to keep your name and other personal information confidential. Students and researchers are not told donors’ names, nor does Stanford publish them. In some cases, donors or their families may choose to disclose that they are supporting Stanford’s Willed Body Program, such as when asking loved ones to make gifts to the program.

Death Certificate and Medical History
At the time of death, the attending physician will complete a death certificate. In most cases, Stanford will coordinate the filing of this certificate for you. It is not necessary to provide a medical history of the donor. However, if one is available, it will be helpful to our students in the course of their studies.

How to Register
Are you ready to register as a donor?

On our website, you can download and print out the registration form or request the information packet and registration form be sent to you in the mail. Please visit our website at: http://anatomy.stanford.edu (click on the link for body donation program). Registration is not complete until we receive the signed registration form by mail, fax or email. Once we complete the registration process you will be mailed a Donor Wallet Card.

No computer?
Just give us a call at 650-725-6624 and we will mail you everything you need.

Questions? Email us at anatomy@stanford.edu or call us at 650-725-6624.

Give this information to your family, caregivers, physician, and attorney, and have it attached to your medical chart if you are in the hospital.

Instructions for Family & Caregivers
Thank you for helping to fulfill this donor’s wishes by contacting the Willed Body Program. You are playing an important part in the education of students at Stanford University.

Upon the death of a pre-registered donor, please notify us at 650-723-2404 as soon as possible, and we will arrange for a mortuary to pick up the body within a few hours.

This phone number is monitored all day, every day, including weekends and holidays, so do not wait to contact us. Calling this number will page one of our staff members, who will call you back promptly. In most cases we must receive the body within 12 hours of death.

Occasionally, a donor’s illness or other considerations will prevent us from being able to accept a donation. Our representative will make this determination during the initial phone call and will inform you in the event alternate arrangements will be needed.

If you are interested in making a tax-deductible donation in the name of a loved one or to support educational and research endeavors within Clinical Anatomy, you can do so by visiting our website at http://anatomy.stanford.edu/friends.html
DONOR REGISTRATION FORM

Thank you for registering to donate your body to the Stanford Willed Body Program. You are making a priceless gift to the field of education, and it is greatly appreciated by the faculty, students, and staff at Stanford University.

Please complete the Donor Registration Form below and sign it, along with two witnesses. You should also make a copy of the signed form (or sign a second one) for your own records, and inform your family, caregivers, physician, and attorney of your wishes.

Return the completed form to: Division of Clinical Anatomy
Stanford University
269 Campus Dr.
CCSR 0125, MC 5140
Stanford, CA 94305

Or, you may fax the completed form to us at 650-725-8668 or scan and email it to us at anatomy@stanford.edu and retain the original for your records.

I hereby state that it is my wish to donate my body to the Stanford University School of Medicine immediately upon my death, for purposes of teaching and furthering medical and scientific knowledge, in such manner deemed appropriate by the Stanford University Willed Body Program.

I attest that I have read and agree to the program guidelines and policies explained in the Information for Donors document. I understand that my donation may be refused if, at the sole discretion of the program’s representative, the program is unable to accept it for any reason.

Date: __________________________   Witnesses (2)

Print Donor’s Name: __________________________

Donor’s Signature: __________________________

Birth Date: __________________________

Address: ____________________________________

(Street Address)

(City, State, Zip)

Phone no. (optional): __________________________   Email (optional): __________________________

Please remember to notify the program of any change in your address.

Upon the donor’s death, call 650-723-2404 for immediate pickup. We are on-call 24 hours/day, every day, and will arrange for a funeral home to pick up the body within a few hours.