

held, it is important that the local mortician be informed of the body donation before the body is removed to the funeral home.

Can next of kin arrange a body donation?

Yes. The person or persons legally entitled to custody of the body may sign the release form, described in this brochure, to make a donation.

What if I have expressed a wish to bequeath my body but neglect to sign the deed form before death occurs?

Your survivors can carry out your wishes by immediately notifying the Forensic Science Program of your death and then signing the release form. This release form should be sent with the body to Grand Forks.

If I become deceased far from Grand Forks can I still donate?

If your estate covers the cost of transport, yes. However, the next of kin may want to consider donating to the nearest body donation program if there is a closer one-bearing in mind that the appropriate paperwork must be completed for any donation.

Is there an age restriction on donation?

No. However, individuals must be of legal age to sign the donation forms. Parents may donate the bodies of infants or children using the Next-of-Kin release.

Can I alter or revoke my donation request?

Yes. Simply notify the Forensic Science Program in writing that you wish to cancel the donation-utilizing the appropriate paperwork.

Can the Program refuse my donation?

Yes. We will not accept the donation if the next of kin is unwilling to proceed with your donation. We cannot accept individuals with prion-related infectious diseases. Donors ex-

ceeding 500lbs in weight cannot be accepted. Donations will also be refused if the program is at capacity.

Will having an infectious disease make a donor unacceptable?

No, unless that infection is prion-related (such as Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease). Many serious infectious agents, such as those causing hepatitis, HIV, and tuberculosis, cannot survive the skeletonization process, so there is no risk of transmission from skeletal material. Our donor intake procedures include standard precautions for prevention of disease transmission (and truthfully, we assume every donor has an infectious disease whether he or she was aware of it or not).

Is there any other way I can support the Program or Forensic Science Program, besides body donation?

Yes. You can choose to make a financial gift to the Forensic Science Program. Financial donations support improvement of educational resources by providing for maintenance, updated equipment, and scholarships. Please contact the program director if you have an interest in supporting the program financially.

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Frequently Asked Questions



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What is an “Anthropological Body Donation Program?”

Anthropological Body Donation Programs (Program) exist primarily to support education and research about human skeletal anatomy. These programs are strongly associated with forensic anthropology programs, and support the study of how human skeletons change or vary because of age, ancestry, gender, height or weight, and bony response to past or recent trauma, to name a few areas. This is essentially a skeleton donation program.

Are you a part of or affiliated with the dede'd body program at the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences?

No, we are a separate Program based in the Forensic Science Program in the Anthropology Department.

How does your program differ from the dede'd body program at the School of Health and Medicine?

Our Program accepts individuals who were subject to autopsy, organ donation (except bone marrow), passing due to trauma, or who experience a prolonged gap between the moment of passing and discovery. Also, whenever possible we strive to collect biographical information about our donors through a questionnaire, before the time of donation.

Why are bone marrow donors excluded?

Those who choose the Program are choosing to donate their skeletons for educational purposes. Bone marrow donation removes most of the skeleton, making such donors unacceptable for the program.

If I am donating my entire body in order to donate my skeleton, what happens to the rest of my body?

All of the non-skeletal portions are removed

and disposed of in a manner respectful for human tissues and in compliance with North Dakota law.

What happens to my skeleton?

The skeletal tissue is cleaned and labeled with an archive number that connects the skeleton to the questionnaire while protecting the identity of the actual donor and donor family. Thereafter the skeleton is used for educational purposes, and is retained in curation in the Forensic Science Program and Anthropology Department in perpetuity.

Can I have the soft tissue cremated and returned to my family as cremains (cremated remains)?

No. Once your body is bequeathed to the Anthropology Department, all components will remain in the possession of the Program until they are disposed of in a manner respectful to human tissues and in compliance with North Dakota law.

Will donation to the Anthropological Body Donation Program allow me to have a “free” funeral?

No. The donor’s estate or next of kin must cover the typical costs of funeral preparation that involve a body donation. This includes the cost of transport, and possibly embalming if the family chooses it. Embalming is not necessary for donation to the Program.

Will the Forensic Science Program pay for my body?

No. By law, educational programs utilizing human bodies are not allowed to purchase a human body from a donor, his or her estate, or next of kin.

Many dede'd body programs subsidize the cost of transport. Your instructions say “as funds allow.” What does this mean?

As long as funds are available the Forensic Science Program will subsidize up to \$200 of transportation costs. When funds are exhausted, the donor must assume all costs or seek an alternate plan. The Pro-

gram is small and is very dependent on the generosity of its donors. The primary expression of that generosity is that those providing a body donation also cover the costs of transport.

I like the idea of my skeleton being around after my passing. Can my family arrange to view my skeleton?

No. Family viewings fall under funeral arrangements. The Forensic Science Program does not provide funeral services, as this would violate the legal basis of educational body donations.

How do I initiate the process of donation?

You complete a few simple forms and sign them in the presence of witnesses. The signatures do not need to be notarized. The witnesses must be over the age of 18. One of the witnesses must have no interest or stake in your choice to donate your body. We recommend informing your next of kin of your wishes, and leaving copies of the bequeathal form with your selected funeral home, attorney, next of kin, and in your own files.

What is the procedure at the time of death?

The family or estate should contact the selected funeral home and ask them to contact the Forensic Science Program. The program director will work with the funeral home to schedule transport to the Forensic Science Program laboratory.

May a customary or traditional type of funeral service be held prior to transfer of the body to Grand Forks?

Yes. It is the privilege of the family to decide whether there is to be a traditional funeral service with a casket and the body present or if there is to be a memorial after the body has been sent to the Forensic Science Program. However, in the event that a funeral is to be