The Honourable Adriana LaGrange

Minister of Health

Office of the Minister of Health

423 Legislature Building

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Dear Minister LaGrange,

**RE: MODERNIZING ALBERTA’S ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION SYSTEM**

With the passing of Bill 205, the Alberta Human Tissue & Organ Donation (Mandatory Referral) Amendment Act, in May 2022, the Alberta Government is presented with a significant opportunity to establish Alberta as a leader in organ and tissue donation and transplantation (OTDT). I am calling upon the government to continue its leadership and invest in establishing an OTDT system that unequivocally prioritizes organ and tissue donation, ultimately improving the lives of those waiting on transplant lists.

Alberta Government has the opportunity to become this leader in OTDT and directly improve the lives of thousands waiting for a transplant and a life-altering tissue donation, honour all who have died waiting for a transplant, and recognize hundreds of thousands of Albertans registered as organ donors.

Minister LaGrange, it is within your authority as the Minister of Health to ensure Albertans have improved access to world-class health care when and where they need it. Within OTDT, I request you implement the following:

1. **Funding:** Aligned with the Alberta Organization Group’s (AOG) analysis, a commitment of new money, $25 – 30 million, over the next ten years to support policy and operational change required after the passing of Bill 205.
2. **Leadership:** An integrated pan-provincial system that integrates HOPE and SAODTP with a transparent, full-time, accountable, senior executive champion and leader.

Alberta’s deceased donation rates have been lower compared to that in other higher performing provinces over the past fifteen years or more (British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia). Rate have increased recently; however, this is partly due to the devastating result of the opioid crisis. Other provinces have invested in a single integrated provincial agency responsible for the effective administration and coordination of organ and tissue donation and transplantation services. It is time and the opportunity for Alberta to be transformational.

Under our existing system, Alberta cannot modernize effectively due to its fragmented dual structure (North and South). This means that every day, thousands of Albertans are needlessly suffering, and many die. This is unacceptable. Minister LaGrange, these steps are needed to embrace innovative, sustainable, comprehensive, and lifesaving change to Alberta’s organ & tissue donation system.

Organ donation is the ultimate gift of life, but more is needed to ensure no missed donor opportunities. Why? Because one donor can save the lives of up to eight people and improve the quality of life of another 75. Our current system has failed too many. I am calling upon the government to establish an OTDT system that unequivocally prioritizes organ and tissue donation, ultimately improving the lives of those waiting on transplant lists.

**Again, this can be achieved by investing $25 - 30 million.** At a time when fiscal responsibility is imperative, the new Alberta deceased donation program will be self-funding after six years ($15 million), and the remaining funds will be used for continuous improvement and demand.This investment will improve the lives of up to 2700 patients and save Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services up to $400 million over ten years.

**It is time to commit new money, $25-$30 million, over the next ten years to modernize a fragmented system and ensure Albertans are not needlessly dying. I urge you to include this funding in the 2024-2025 budget or earlier.**

Minister LaGrange, thank you for taking the time to read my letter. It is time Alberta becomes a leader in organ and tissue donation and transplantation and that the wishes of all Albertans to donate, both rural and urban, are respected and honoured. Anything less would merely serve as a temporary measure, perpetuating the prolonged suffering and preventable loss of life for those awaiting transplants.

Sincerely,

CC: Danielle Smith, Premier of Alberta

Rachel Notley, Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition & MLA for Edmonton-Strathcona

David Shepherd, MLA for Edmonton-City Centre & Opposition Health Critic

The Kidney Foundation, Northern Alberta & The Territories Branch.