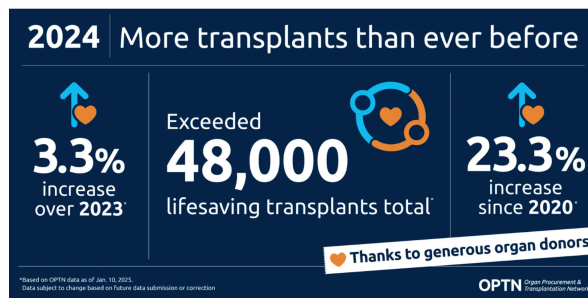
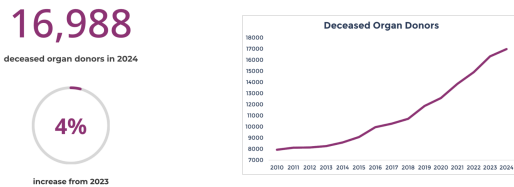
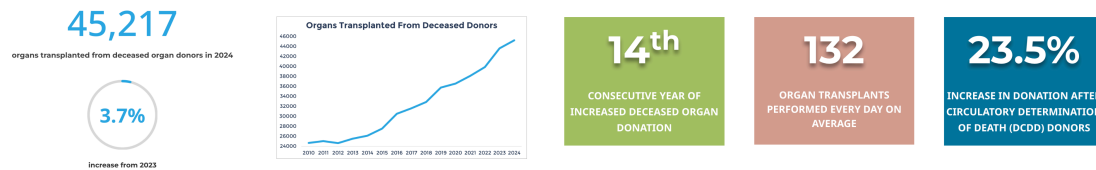


<https://sidandt.org/the-science/donation-by-the-numbers>

Organ Donation and Transplant Increases Year-Over-Year

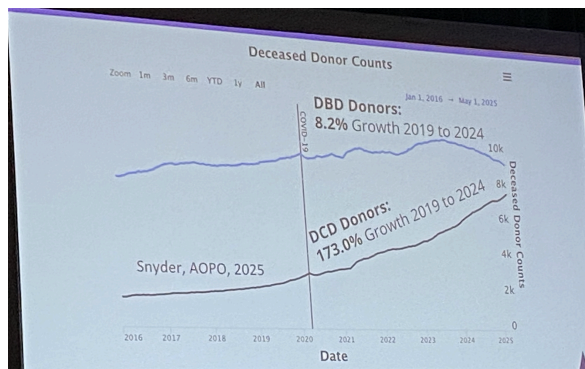
Deceased donor transplants have set new annual records each of the past 14 years, guided by our system of non-profit Organ Procurement Organizations. According to official data from the [Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network](#) (OPTN) more organ transplants occurred in the United States in 2024 than ever before.



[Graphics and data provided by AOPO](#)

Donation After Circulatory Death (DCD) Drives Increases

There has been a 173% increase in DCD donors between 2019 - 2024, which is driving the dramatic growth in the number of donors and the number of organs available for transplant. During that same period Donation After Brain Death (DBD) increased by 8.2%.



[Graphic and data provided by Jon Snyder and SRTR](#)

“DCD refers to the recovery of organs from a patient who has died due to the irreversible loss of circulatory and respiratory function, when the heart has stopped beating and cannot be restarted. This is distinct from Donation after Brain Death (DBD), where death is declared based on irreversible loss of brain function. Both definitions of death are recognized under the Uniform Determination of Death Act (UDDA), which has guided state laws for over 40 years.

Typically, DCD is an option after a patient has suffered a catastrophic neurologic injury but does not meet the medical criteria for brain death.”

[Learn more about DCD from Andrew Klein, MD, MBA, Chief Medical Officer, UNOS](#)

Organ Donation and Transplant Challenges

The surge of new DCD donors are taxing the transplant system.

DCD patients are often older and sicker donors giving the gift of life. This has triggered two major challenges that OPO and transplant leaders are addressing:

1) Non-Utilization Rates Have Increased

The OPO system is currently recovering more kidneys than are transplanted. The number of kidneys that are donated but not transplanted is the “non-utilization” rate, which has skyrocketed.

In 2024 alone, nearly 12,000 potentially life-saving organs were discarded in the United States. [OPOs made more than 26 million attempts](#) to place these rare gifts with transplant centers before they are ultimately discarded as medical waste.

2) Allocation Out of Sequence/Rescue Pathways Has Increased

As a short-term solution to the surplus of organs, and while working on systemic changes, OPOs have developed Rescue Pathways. These are especially for kidneys, the most donated and most needed organ.

“There is evidence to suggest that some transplant providers might be rejecting good organ offers that could benefit the recipient because of a reluctance to perform riskier surgeries for fear it could damage the transplant center’s statistics.” [National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine \(NASEM\) 2022 report](#)

TAKE ACTION:

Learn more about [Allocation out of Sequence](#) and listen to **SID&T Advisor Dr. Matt Cooper** as he discusses how to balance equity and utility.