Abstract is to be typed in a **10 point** font/typeface (Times Roman preferred) and **must fit** in the space below; additional pages **may not** be submitted.

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Date: _____

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TITLE:

CONCENTRATED PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION TO IMPLEMENT ROUTINE REFERRAL LEGISLATION INCREASES ORGAN DONATIONS

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:

Changes in standard hospital practice for anatomical donations were mandated under legislated routine referral of all patient deaths to the organ procurement organizations (OPOs). The OPO developed a standard hospital protocol designed to improve the organ donor referral and family request process. The protocol directed designated hospital staff, trained by the OPO, to make early referrals of patients with non-recoverable brain injuries and included routine on-site evaluation by the OPO prior to family discussion regarding donation. Meetings were held in 136 hospitals with medical staff and administration to gain support of the OPO-designed protocol, which had previously been endorsed by the state hospital association. Professional education targeted the practitioners who were most closely involved in the organ donation process to include neuroscientists, trauma surgeons, and intensivists. Group meetings were organized to forge a consensus among medical staff on adopting the practices outlined in the recommended protocol.

DESCRIPTION OF EVALUATION (if completed, provide results):

Results

Referral and donation activity was analyzed for calendar years 1994, prior to the enactment of the law, and 1997, after most hospitals implemented protocols. Nearly 87% (118 of 136) of hospitals adopted the policy provided by the OPO, facilitating a uniform practice for making early patient referrals and coordinating the family approach. Results were as follows:

	1994	1997	1994 vs. 1997 (% Increase)
Organ Donor Referrals	528	949	80%
Organ Donors	175	252	44%

The number of organ donor referrals increased by 80% (+421), and actual organ donors increased by 44% (+77). Legislation requiring hospitals to change protocols for anatomical donation laid the groundwork for the OPO to access medical staff and administration audiences historically difficult to reach. A professional education strategy intended to implement the law into standard hospital practice was essential in order to minimize variability among hospitals. Analysis of the family request process variables and retrospective medical review findings is ongoing in order to measure the changes in hospital staff practice. Routine referral law, however, with aggressive implementation effectively changed staff behavior and increased organ donations.

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