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## Religious Counsel



Deputy Minister Litzman Photo: Dudi Vaaknin

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### Litzman seeks rabbis' advice on health issues

#### Deputy health minister to form committee of ultra-orthodox rabbis to provide consultation on medical issues that raise Halachic dilemmas, such as organ donations and abortions

Ari Galahar

Deputy Health Minister Yakov Litzman has decided to form a committee of ultra-Orthodox rabbis that would advise him on health issues that raise halachic dilemmas, such as organ donation and abortions.

The committee will provide consultation on matters in which Litzman and the Health Ministry's professional staff are expected to be conflicted on.

A source close to Litzman said that the committee will not address budgetary or ministerial issues, only matters pertaining to Jewish law.

"Deputy Minister Litzman is interested in founding the committee because he wishes to make decisions on halachic issues that are relevant to the entire public while relying on the opinions of all haredi sectors, and not only the stream he is affiliated with," he explained.

According to the source, Litzman will aspire to accept the new body's recommendations on Halacha and medicine.

Chairman of the doctors' council at Bikur Cholim Hospital in Jerusalem, Dr. Effie Halperin, agreed that there is no reason why the Health Ministry should ignore the relation between medicine and Halacha. "In the past I advised the hospital to initiate a move to concentrate information on the subject, but it didn't materialize.

"I view this initiative as highly positive, as long as these recommendations don't take precedence in the decision-making process."

Dr. Halperin said he did not predict a clash between Litzman and his professional team on this subject, and added that he was more concerned about patients delaying medical diagnoses while waiting for a rabbinical opinion.

"I expect that these rabbis will help in Halachic and medical aspects, and that they keep on top of medical developments," he concluded.

### Dilemma

#### Heart recipient's father: We'll never donate organs / Dr. Itay Gal

Haredi man whose daughter's life was saved thanks to heart, lungs donation from Arab child killed in car crash says Halacha prohibits him, his family from donating organs

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