



Children's Hospital Colorado

**Anesthesiology**

Ph: (720) 777-6226

Fx: (720) 777-7266

**David M. Polaner, MD, FAAP**

Professor of Anesthesiology  
and Pediatrics

david.polaner@ucdenver.edu

3 March 2016

Robert Berman, Director  
Halachic Organ Donor Society  
P.O. Box 693  
New York, NY 10108-0693

I am a pediatric anesthesiologist and the Director of Pediatric Transplant Anesthesia at Children's Hospital Colorado and the University of Colorado School of Medicine. I have been a pediatric transplant anesthesiologist and a member of the transplant team here and at my previous position at Tufts Medical School and the Floating Hospital for Children in Boston for 20 years. I am also an Orthodox Jew, a member of the East Denver Orthodox Synagogue, and am proud to be a member of the Halachic Organ Donor Society.

Organs for transplantation- heart, lungs, pancreas, intestines, kidney and liver- all must be matched with a recipient before procurement (removal of organs from a deceased donor) begins, so a donated organ always immediately goes to save a specific person's life. Rarely, if a designated recipient is unable to accept an organ (usually due to an acute illness that poses an unacceptable risk for the operation) the next person who is awaiting a transplant and is a match will be offered the organ instead. Aside from skin and corneas, solid and visceral organs cannot be stored. There is no such thing as an "organ bank."

The operation during which the transplant surgeons remove organs from a deceased person whose heart is still beating (with the help of a ventilator) cannot even begin until all the recipients are identified from the transplant waiting list and their readiness to accept the organ is confirmed. We have the recipient ready to go into the operating room as soon as the organ arrives- this is critical to minimize the time the donor organ is disconnected from normal circulation. In fact, since organs can only stay alive outside the human body for a limited time sometimes an organ is not removed from a cadaveric donor if an appropriate recipient is not found geographically close enough so the organ could survive the trip. Fortunately, this is virtually never the case for kidneys, since perfusion pumps are able to preserve the organ for a much longer period of time.

Becoming a member of HODS ensures that one's wishes to fulfill the mitzvah of pikuach nefesh in a halachically appropriate manner are clearly communicated. I urge everyone who is a shomer mitzvot to become a member of HODS and sign a donor card, and to encourage others to do so.

www.childrenscolorado.org



David M. Polaner

David M. Polaner, MD, FAAP  
Professor of Anesthesiology and Pediatrics, University of Colorado School of Medicine  
Attending Pediatric Anesthesiologist and Director of Transplant Anesthesia  
Children's Hospital Colorado