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Brain Death Toolkit Foreword

Brain Death (or, “death by neurological criteria”) is a medical and legal determination of death that has established widespread acceptance over many decades. Although revisions to national and international guidelines of practice have occurred, the core principles of brain death determination have remained the same, and the concept of brain death has stood the test of time. The guidelines have become more rigorous over time, and education surrounding brain death should keep pace with that effort.

In this toolkit, you will find many resources that we hope will help in the understanding of brain death, both conceptually and in practice. Our goal in creating this toolkit was to present a straightforward, easily accessible set of tools for use by anyone who may be involved in the determination of brain death. It includes access to multiple educational offerings, including instructional videos, webinars and web-based courses. It also provides a sample brain death policy and checklist, which may be used as a template for adoption at individual institutions/hospitals. We provide resources to explain the pitfalls and challenges in brain death determination, and have also included Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ’s), both for medical practitioners and the general public.

We hope you find this toolkit to be a helpful resource, and that it enables clinicians to accurately and appropriately determine brain death 100% of the time and further solidifies society’s faith in that determination.

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Chair of the NCS Brain Death Task Force

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