H1N1 & DONATION

Type and Origin of Disease:
H1N1 was originally referred to as “swine flu” as laboratory testing showed many genes of this virus were similar to influenza viruses normally occurring in pigs. Further studies have shown this virus is very different.

Symptoms:
Fever (≥100°F / ≥37.8ºC), chills, headache, upper respiratory tract symptoms (cough, sore throat, rhinorrhea, shortness of breath), myalgias, arthralgias, fatigue, vomiting, or diarrhea.

National Status:
In 2009, an H1N1 pandemic occurred. The World Health Organization declared an end to this pandemic on August 10, 2010. However, this influenza can still occur, and in late 2013 and early 2014, the CDC has begun to receive an increased number of reports of influenza A (H1N1) and pdm09 (pH1N1) virus. (“p” is a reference to the pandemic)

H1N1 and Organ and Tissue Donation:
There is limited knowledge on the transmission of the virus in organ donors. Since there have been well documented respiratory and gastro-intestinal manifestations with this pandemic, lungs, and intestines are not being recovered for transplantation from donors known to be infected with H1N1. Lungs are also not recovered from any donor with seasonal influenza. A study published by Halliday et al. (2012) researched 5 donor cases in the UK that were known to be infected with H1N1. Follow-up with all 13 organ recipients showed none of them were infected with the H1N1 virus. Screening for the influenza and there was variable use of antiviral chemoprophylaxis in the recipients. Donor suitability of a known H1N1 infected potential donor will be considered in conjunction with CDC guidelines and United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) policy as well as discussions with Infectious Diseases consultation and the organ procurement organization’s medical director.

How can you help?
When referring a patient to OneLegacy for consultation, inform them if the potential organ, eye and/or tissue donor
- presented with or was diagnosed to have a febrile illness or influenza-like illness (see symptoms above)
- was knowingly exposed to an individual at home or in their community infected with H1N1
- was treated with antivirals for influenza or H1N1, what type of vaccine and the timeframe it was given

Organ Donation:
Potential organ donors infected with H1N1 will be considered for organ donation, although the lungs and small bowel are not suitable for transplantation in these cases.

Tissue Donation:
Patients with confirmed active viral H1N1 at time of death are contraindicated for all tissues. But the death must still be referred to the OPO.

24-Hour Organ/Tissue Donor Referral: (800) 338-6112