

Frequently Asked Questions

For what purpose is an anatomical donation utilized?

Anatomical donors are utilized by the School of Medicine and other healthcare related curriculums at the Southern Illinois University. Besides the School of Medicine, those programs include: Nursing, Physiology, Lincoln Scholars, and Mortuary Science & Funeral Service. On rare occasions, a donor may be used by programs outside the Southern Illinois University system, but these programs are preselected to meet the strict requirements of the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine.

Are anatomical donations used in specific research studies?

Though the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine is a research institution, most anatomical donations are utilized as a general teaching resource for our students. This allows students to obtain personal knowledge of human anatomy. On occasion, faculty researchers in the medical field will request the use of an anatomical donation for research, but this is uncommon.

What happens after the study is complete?

After the study, all anatomical donors are cremated at Southern Illinois University. If the family desires, the cremated remains can be returned to them at no charge. If a donor's next of kin wishes to have the cremated remains returned, this can be indicated on the Authorization for Disposal of Cremated Remains form that is completed at the time of the donation. If the next of kin decides not to have the cremated remains returned, they will be placed in the School of Medicine Mausoleum at Pleasant Grove Memorial Park, Old Route 13, Murphysboro, IL.

How long will it be before the cremated remains are returned to the family?

Various factors determine the amount of time a donor is held for our program. It may be as short as just a few months, or it could be up to three years. Currently, the average amount of time for the cremated remains to be returned to the donor's family is thirty-six months. Cremation takes place in the fall at the end of the academic year. The next of kin will receive notification when and where the cremated remains are shipped to. The next of kin is always welcome to contact the School of Medicine to discuss when they can expect to receive the cremated remains of their loved one back.

Does the School of Medicine have a memorial service honoring the anatomical donors?

Each spring, the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine has a memorial service to honor those individuals that have given the ultimate gift of being an anatomical donor. The donor's family and friends are invited to attend the ceremony and help celebrate the life of their loved one. As a way of showing their appreciation, the ceremony is conducted by the first-year medical students, physiology students, and mortuary science students. An invitation to the ceremony is provided up to 6 weeks prior.

Can a memorial donation be made to the medical school in honor of a loved one?

A tax-deductible memorial donation can be made payable to the SIU Foundation and be sent to Anatomical Donation Coordinator, 600 Agriculture Drive, MC 6503, Lindegren Hall, Room 307, Carbondale, IL 62901. Proceeds from the donations will be used directly by the School of Medicine to assist with the program needs of the anatomical lab and the students in their pursuit of anatomical studies.



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Is there any cost for being an anatomical donor?

There is no expense incurred by the family from the School of Medicine for becoming an anatomical donor. The next of kin will be responsible for any expense from the funeral home that they select to assist with the donation. A funeral home should be able to provide an itemized invoice of the charges and a general price list for all their available services. The School of Medicine will be responsible for any expense incurred after the donor is transported and received in our facility.

Is a funeral home required to be involved?

The School of Medicine will only accept a donation from a licensed funeral director or a representative of the firm. The funeral director is responsible for securing the necessary documentation, confirming that the donor meets the necessary criteria, and transporting the donor to the School of Medicine. The School of Medicine does not have any affiliation with any particular funeral home and does not control the pricing a funeral home may charge for a donation.

Will I receive payment for the donation?

No, the School of Medicine does not offer payment to individuals or families for being an anatomical donor.

How do I become an anatomical donor?

An anatomical donation can be made in several different ways. Prior to death, an individual can pre-arrange his/her intention to donate. After death, the next of kin, executor of the estate or other responsible person can authorize the donation. In either instance, Illinois law requires that an Anatomical Gift Form will need to be completed. This form can be obtained directly from the School of Medicine by calling 618-453-8438 or from our web site at www.siumed.edu/anatomical-donations.html. Also, many funeral homes have the necessary documentation and will assist with the process.

By completing the application, does that guarantee that I am a registered donor?

SIU School of Medicine does not allow pre-registration. While an individual may desire to express his/her wishes by completing the Anatomical Gift form ahead of time, no donation can be accepted until it is confirmed that the donor meets our criteria at the time of death. These criteria help to determine if the remains are suitable for our study and do not pose a health risk to our students and staff. It is for this reason that donations are not confirmed for acceptance prior to death. Records are properly maintained of each donor, once the anatomical donation is accepted at the time of death.

Is the program regulated by any organization?

The Illinois Anatomical Gift Act authorizes the SIU School of Medicine to receive whole body donations for academic and scientific study. The School of Medicine is also a member of the Anatomical Gift Association of Illinois, whose members constitute most of the medical education institutions in the State of Illinois. The Anatomical Gift Association is an Illinois not-for-profit corporation. Illinois law authorizes it to procure, prepare and effect the disposition of the remains of anatomical donors used by medical education institutions within the state. As a member, the School of Medicine participates in formulating best practices and policies relating to the procuring, preparation and preservation of anatomical donors for use by medical education institutions within the state... For additional information or to find other approved anatomical donation programs, please visit www.againinois.org or call (312) 733-5283.

Additional questions? Please contact us at (618) 453-8438.