



## **HUMAN TISSUE IS CRITICAL TO MEDICAL RESEARCH AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE**

Science Care Urges Tissue Recipients to Combat Illegal Trade

Phoenix, AZ (May 30, 2006) – In response to recent media coverage of criminal activities and illegal trade of human parts, Science Care, the first accredited whole body donor program in the United States, is calling for medical researchers, surgeons and tissue recipients to play a more significant role to ensure that human tissues are obtained from legitimate, ethical sources.

Lack of knowledge or preconceived notions of whole body donation put medical evolution at risk. Surgeons need human tissue in order to continue offering state-of-the-art medical evaluation and treatment, and to learn and practice the latest surgical techniques and implantable devices. Studies indicate that medical errors kill some 44,000 people in U.S hospitals each year. Another study of 146 surgical injuries at three Boston area hospitals found that surgeon inexperience played a role in 53% of the injuries.

“Details of surgical anatomy are best learned by dissection of human tissues. The continued shortage means that the latest surgical techniques will be learned by a limited number of surgeons. It also means that research and new or refined procedures may take longer to develop,” said Stephen L. Ritland, M.D. a neurosurgeon at the Flagstaff Medical Center in Flagstaff, Arizona.

Human tissue also is needed for medical research. Researchers use human tissue to develop early diagnosis for breast cancer, new treatments for emphysema, and minimally invasive surgical techniques for aortic valve replacements, brain tumors, congestive heart failure and lumbar spine surgery.

“Post-mortem research is an important tool to help us discover the cause of degenerative diseases. The more brains that are donated, the more research can be conducted in this area,” said Wallace Tourtellotte, M.D., PhD. a neurologist at the Human Brain and Spinal Fluid Resource Center in Los Angeles.

“Unless doctors, medical researchers and tissue recipients are willing to play a bigger role vetting their sources, abuses in the industry will likely continue,” said James Rogers, President and CEO of Science Care. “However, we believe that tissue banks are moving towards a more regulated approach. Tissue banks should be required to seek accreditation.”

The following are some guidelines to help organ recipients, medical researchers and surgeons determine if tissues they have obtained are from a legitimate and accredited source. Donors are also encouraged to question a tissue bank’s practices in a similar way.

### **Tissue Bank Evaluation Guidelines**

The first distinguishing characteristic of a legitimate tissue bank is accreditation by the American Association of Tissue Banks (AATB). The AATB establishes standards for tissue bank functions that relates to staff, donor, tissue, and record management. Tissue Banks accredited by the AATB must meet strict performance standards for:

- Donor selection
- Donor consent
- Acquisition of Tissue
- Processing tissue
- Storage of tissue
- Packaging of tissue
- Labeling of tissue
- Distribution of tissue

Science Care recommends that interested donors and recipients of human tissue visit the AATB web site for a list of accredited Tissue Banks at [www.aatb.org](http://www.aatb.org).

Science Care also recommends they pose the following questions to a Tissue Bank:

- What procedures do you have in place to prevent theft of the bodies and unscrupulous activities by your employees?
- Have you been inspected by the AATB? What were their findings?
- What steps do you take to ensure that the donated body is used ethically, legally, respectfully and according to the wishes of the deceased?
- What steps do you take to ensure human tissue is treated with respect and dignity, and not like a commodity?
- Are donations anonymous? What steps are taken to protect donor confidentiality?

#### **About Science Care**

Science Care ([www.sciencecare.com](http://www.sciencecare.com)) sets the standard of excellence for the donation and responsible use of human tissues for medical research and training. Science Care's donor program contributes to a wide-range of essential and innovative medical developments including advanced physician training, surgical device development and neurological research, seeking cures for diseases and new prescription drug discovery. Accredited by the American Association of Tissue Banks (AATB) in Arizona and Colorado, as well as licensed by the state of New York Department of Health, Science Care is headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona, with offices in Colorado and a Science Care Bioskills advanced medical research, training and conference facility in Arizona. For more information about Science Care, please call (602) 331-3641 or (800) 417-3747; or e-mail: [info@sciencecare.com](mailto:info@sciencecare.com)

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