



Science Care, Inc.

Written Testimony

To the Sunset Advisory Commission

Establishing Regulations for Non-Transplant Anatomical Donation Organizations in the State of Texas

Submitted By:


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The Science Care Program is built on a solid foundation of public trust. Our Program's foundation is our culture of respect for donors, their loved ones, our employees, and the communities that are home to our operations. We have one opportunity to honor a donor's last wishes, and we take that responsibility very seriously.




Dear Members of the Commission,

I first want to thank you for the opportunity to present a written statement on behalf of not just Science Care, but every Texan who has donated or stated their intent to donate their body to science through the Science Care Program. I am excited for the opportunity to educate you on our Program and the uniqueness of our industry. It is my firm belief body donation to science touches every part of our lives, the lives of our loved ones, and the lives of future generations. Our donors leave a selfless gift that lives on in all of us.

For over 11 years, I have had the privilege of carrying out the wishes of tens of thousands of donors, and there is one thing I am confident about: The Science Care Program is built on a solid foundation of public trust. We know the importance of robust, consistent, transparent operations and industry oversight in maintaining that public trust. During our years as a public trust program, we have witnessed the unfortunate outcomes of a few unethical individuals and organizations, who have threatened the integrity and moral perception of the entire industry. It is important to point out these organizations' actions are not a reflection of the industry, but a reflection of unprincipled individuals who took advantage of donors and their loved ones at an extremely difficult and vulnerable time.

Science Care has grown to be the largest non-transplant tissue bank in the world. We continue to grow our Program with the highest level of integrity and ethics. Our team takes pride in doing right things right. We are not here to shirk our responsibilities or to suggest we should not be regulated. Science Care supports laws to ensure donors fully understand and consent to the extraordinary donation they are making. We believe our industry should be held accountable. In fact, in 2003 we were the first non-transplant tissue bank to ever be accredited by the American Association of Tissue Banks (AATB). Science Care helped to draft the first set of AATB standards for Non-Transplant Anatomical Donation Organizations (NADO). We have worked for years to establish regulations requiring our industry to be accredited with the AATB to help raise the bar and hold the entire industry to a standard that enables a donor's end of life contribution to have the desired humanitarian effect through appropriate and ethical practices by all. It took over 6 years for another non-transplant tissue bank to voluntarily commit to the rigorous requirements for AATB accreditation. Our legislative efforts in Florida to assist the Anatomical Board and the State of Florida to structure a system that better suited their resources, while holding our industry more accountable resulted in several other NADO's seeking accreditation as well. Post Florida legislation, there are now 7 NADO's accredited with the AATB, compared to just 2 prior to 2014. On a personal level, I am very proud to have been a part of such an impactful change and am committed to continuing to raise the bar.

You will undoubtedly have our tax-status thrown at you throughout this process. With the few unethical individuals who have acted out in the past few years within the industry, it has sparked sensationalized media, editorial tactics and narrow-minded people to point towards our tax-status and cast their personal beliefs on morals, ethics and integrity. This has been the only angle the media has been able to target Science Care with. We don't evaluate our vendors, or our medical professionals based on tax status, and don't want to get in an ethical debate on the validity, but we believe there is a lot more to determining who the public chooses as their provider than simply a tax status. As individuals we evaluate



businesses and programs on the criteria we value as important to make the best decisions for us and our loved ones. The most important thing to point out with our tax status is our transparency with our donors and their loved ones in the consenting process. We do not hide our for-profit status. It is clearly outlined and acknowledged in every consent.

(Science Care Self Consent – **Exhibit 6**)

(Science Care Dual Consent – **Exhibit 7**)

Of the more than 19,000 funeral homes in the United States, only a handful are not-for-profit, and even fewer provide no cost options to families that are not funded by state assistance. We are proud Science Care can offer a no cost option upon acceptance into our Program for our donors and their loved ones. This is made possible by linking our donors with some of the most prestigious medical establishments around the world who continue to push for advancements in medical treatments to improve our quality of life. Our ability to make this link allows our donors to proudly leave a legacy that is not about death or the cost of a mere cremation, but about life. It is the gift of life and a healthier tomorrow for all of us.

My goal is to provide you with information for comparison on how the Science Care Program differs from the current Willied Body Program structure within the state of Texas, as well as some specifics on the standards we hold ourselves to. I know you will be challenged with evaluating not just the Texas State Anatomical Board structure, but also how to structure the legislation for companies like Science Care who represent a very different side of the industry than the current State Anatomical Board structure covers. It is my hope the information I leave you with today will help you to make informed decisions on what rights you want the citizens of Texas to have when making the choice on how to handle their end-of-life decisions.

I am proud to be the voice of the tens of thousands of donors I have helped to place with programs in the last 11 years in this industry. I am also equally proud of our medical researchers and educators who not only help us carry out the wishes of our donors but help all of us to experience continuous improvement in areas involving education, diagnostics, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation. Most importantly, I am proud to be the voice for over 12,048 Texans who have registered and stated their intent to donate their body to the Science Care Program upon their future passing. They have placed their trust in our Program, and you as their representatives, and for that reason we would welcome the opportunity to actively participate in the development of legislation within the State of Texas that protects all citizens, their loved ones, our industry and the state of Texas.

Warmest Regards,



Tricia L. Hammett

Chief Executive Officer & Program Director