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High security standards in organ donation and transplantation ISO 9001-Certificate for organ procurement organisation in Germany

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On October 5th 1999, the Organ Procurement Centre (OPC) in Hannover was officially certified as complying with the DIN EN ISO 9001-Standard. The OPC Hannover, one of seven regional organisations of the German Foundation of Organ Transplantation (DSO) is responsible for organ procurement in Niedersachsen and Ostwestfalen, a large area with a population of 6.8 mil-

lion inhabitants in the north of Germany. TÜV Nord, the certifying organisation, confirmed this to be the first certificate world-wide for an organisation operating in the field of organ donation.

The main task of the OPC Hannover is to support all 150 hospitals in its region in their pursuit of organ retrieval. All activities, from donor identification in the hospital to the transport of the retrieved organs, are coordinated by the OPC independently from Eurotransplant, but in close cooperation with the allocation agency and the transplant centres involved. After the installation of a quality management system, all activities in the donation process have been standardised in order to establish a higher degree of transparency, control and security. Both the patients waiting for an organ and the donor hospitals benefit from this high standard.



Fig.1 From left to right: Lothar Blädtke, OPC Hannover; Prof. Dr. med. Gundolf Gubernatis, Director OPC Hannover; Heike Schäfer, OPC Hannover; Dr. Sabine Willer, TÜV Nord; Heike Basse, OPC Hannover; Prof. Dr. med. Martin Molzahn, Chairman of the executive committee, DSO, Neu-Isenburg



Fig.2 From left to right: Andreas Doeschner, TÜV Nord; Prof. Dr. med. Gundolf Gubernatis, TÜV Nord; Prof. Dr. med. Martin Molzahn, TÜV Nord

“Our aim and duty is to help the hospital fulfil a deceased person’s last wish to donate his or her organs”, Professor Gubernatis, director of the OPC Hannover explains, “Maximum support with minimal impact on the hospitals is our strategy. All steps and responsibilities within the process are clearly defined, allowing for an examination by external authorities at any time.”

A certificate of compliance with DIN EN ISO 9001 certifies an organisation’s ability to consistently perform on a high level of quality. Installing a quality management system is a prerequisite. On one hand, quality management implies the rational use of resources by constantly analysing and improving each step of the do-

nation process. On the other hand, it enables an organisation to provide a service that meets the actual needs of its partners.

DSO, the head organisation of the OPC Hannover, has been responsible for the organisation of organ procurement in Germany since 1984. Presently, 42 transplant coordinators are available round the clock, supporting more than 1400 hospitals in Germany in the process of organ donation. The German transplant law provides the legal basis on which the DSO cooperates with Eurotransplant Leiden and the German transplant centres.