

“Reforming Organ Donation in America”:

➔ A Bridgespan Report that is a danger to American lives

The Bridgespan Report titled “Reforming Organ Donation in America” is a 2017 study funded in part by the activist group ORGANIZE that includes incorrect, outdated and unverified data. Unfortunately, the Report has become the basis of radical changes proposed by the Trump Administration that will dismantle the U.S. organ donation and transplant system — the leading system in the world.

This faulty document, which is not peer-reviewed, is leading policymakers to incorrect conclusions about OPO performance that, if made into policy, will prove deadly for the thousands of Americans who are relying on organ donation for their very lives.

Below are some of the major errors in the Report that skew its findings and recommendations.

BRIDGESPAN FICTION: There are approximately 28,000 extra organs readily available each year that do not get procured or transplanted because of breakdowns in the current system.

FACT: This is a **gross and irresponsible calculation**. 28,000 more organs are not readily available for transplant and it would be impossible to get anywhere near this number without forcing all Americans to donate.

Here is why:

In order to reach the 28,000 number, The Bridgespan Report assumes that every single person eligible for donation — 100% — would choose to donate upon their death. This is simply not the case.

The U.S. leads the world in donation rates at an impressive 70%, but it is still well below Bridgespan's estimate. The only way to reach the 100% level of donation Bridgespan predicts would be to force all people to donate upon their death, eliminating Americans' choice.

The 28,000 number also assumes that every organ recovered from donors would be healthy enough to be transplanted. In fact, on average, 3 of a donors' 8 organs are healthy enough to be transplanted into patients, which also reduces the number of possible organ transplants calculated by Bridgespan by more than 50%.

BRIDGESPAN FICTION: Each year, some 23,000 Americans receive a life-saving organ transplant — a number the Bridgespan Report considers too low.

FACT: The numbers cited in the Bridgespan Report are actually 3 years old — from 2014. In 2017, the year the report was written, there were 34,770 organ transplants — **51% higher than the number published in the report**. Furthermore, that number continues to grow each year. In 2019, there were **35,746** organ transplants.

BRIDGESPAN FICTION: The number of organ transplants in the U.S has remained stagnant year over year.

FACT: There has been a 127% increase in organ transplants over the past 28 years. The Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) website, which is cited in the Bridgespan Report, confirms organ transplants have increased from 15,756 in 1991 to 35,746 in 2019 due to OPOs' work and collaboration with transplant centers and other partners.

BRIDGESPAN FICTION: A chart in the Bridgespan Report suggests that the percent of in-hospital deaths referred by hospitals to OPOs is in the 12% range.

FACT: The percent of in-hospital deaths referred by hospitals to OPOs is in fact in the 90% range due to the relationships OPOs have established with hospitals over the past 40 years.

BRIDGESPAN FICTION: A chart in the Bridgespan Report suggests that the majority of OPOs are underperforming, failing to improve over the last decade.

FACT: 48 of the 58 OPOs in the nation experienced an increase in organ donation from 2018 to 2019, demonstrating their improvement, and 41 OPOs established new all-time annual records for donation, according to the OPTN.
