

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



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January 1, 2014

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Supporting those with medical needs

Dear Brothers:

An updated listing of Hospital Liaison Committee (HLC) members is always available by clicking on the “Contacts” link under the “Search for” heading on the “Lookup” tab of jw.org. Each elder with an account on jw.org should print several copies of the listing and a copy of this letter and the attached guidelines for convenient use in case of an emergency. The congregation secretary should confirm that each elder has done this and should provide a copy for any elder who does not have a jw.org account. Please remember that the HLC member list should not be copied for publishers or posted on the information board.

In most cases, elders should contact the HLC directly and *only* on behalf of baptized and unbaptized publishers who request help to find a cooperative doctor (either for themselves or for their children) or whose medical condition has led to the threat of a blood transfusion. At times, the elders may determine that it would be best for the patient or a family member to contact the HLC directly, especially in emergency situations.—See the letter dated December 11, 2011, to all bodies of elders and the letter dated January 3, 2006, to all congregations, in the permanent file of policy letters.

Continue offering to help individuals, especially the elderly, to execute a valid DPA card and to communicate with the necessary medical personnel before scheduled treatments.

Parents can continue to use the *Identity Card (ic)* for their minor children. The secretary should be sure to provide newly baptized publishers with the following materials:

1. DPA card (*dpa-E Gh 11/04*)
2. *Instructions for Filling Out the DPA Card (dpai)** and the cited references if possible
3. “How Do I View Blood Fractions and Medical Procedures Involving My Own Blood?” (*kmi11/06*)—November 2006 *Our Kingdom Ministry* insert* (*kmi12/06 GH* edition)
4. “Are You Ready to Face a Faith-Challenging Medical Situation?” (*kmi11/90*)—November 1990 *Our Kingdom Ministry* insert* (*km 1/95 GH* edition)

* Available on jw.org

If it seems that many in your congregation do not have a DPA, you may wish to ask the field service group overseers to make a special effort to work with the members of their group, so that each baptized publisher is assisted to have one.

Thank you for helping those in your congregation to plan ahead for unexpected and challenging medical situations. (Eccl. 9:11) Please accept our warm Christian love and greetings.

Your brothers,

*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

cc: Traveling overseers

ASSIST THE LOCAL HLC—SUPPORT THOSE WITH MEDICAL NEEDS

1) **Call the HLC *only* in behalf of baptized and unbaptized publishers who request HLC involvement for themselves or for their children.**

2) **When calling the HLC, have the following applicable information available:**

- Your congregation and telephone number or the number of another available elder
- Name, age, congregation, and telephone number of patient
- Spiritual standing of patient and family. Are unbelieving family members involved?
- Name of hospital, name of doctor, and room/telephone number
- Is a completed DPA card available? If not, help patient to execute one immediately. (Unbaptized publishers can write out their wishes in line with the December 2004 issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry*, page 7.)
- Specific situations (cooperative doctor needed, confrontation, threat to force blood, etc.)

3) **Give special attention and offer assistance to the following ones:**

Pregnant sisters: Requesting advance assistance saves time, often safeguarding the health and life of the mother and her child. Take time to inquire whether she and her husband have located a cooperative doctor and medical facility that have experience in treating our sisters. Since complications can arise throughout pregnancy, volunteer to assist the couple with contacting the HLC and requesting a *Care Plan* packet from the HLC for them, reviewing the points contained in the letters accompanying the *Care Plan* packet and also the information sheet *How Parents Can Protect Their Children From Misuse of Blood (S-55)*, and refer to the article “Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies,” in the November 2009 issue of *Awake!*, pages 26-29, which is usually sent as part of the *Care Plan* packet. A reprint of that article and the S-55 information sheet are also available in the “Forms” section of jw.org.

Children: Some physicians or hospitals, based on their medical or legal understanding, will not give 100-percent assurance that they will not use blood when treating young children, infants, and premature babies. However, when parents consult with the HLC, they are helped to find a physician or surgeon who will go further in agreeing not to give blood. Review with parents the points contained in the S-55 information sheet (see previous point) and share the December 2005 *Our Kingdom Ministry* article “Could Your Child Make a Mature Decision?”

Older ones: Older brothers and sisters may not have Witness family members and could be subjected to intimidation in a hospital. Ensure that they have a DPA card and that their designated health-care agent will uphold their wishes and respect their decisions. Always maintain a copy of their DPA card in the congregation file.

4) **Plan to provide practical and spiritual support to hospitalized publishers.**

Regarding the provision of the HLC and the Patient Visitation Group (PVG), please remember that this arrangement does not relieve local elders of their responsibility to visit the sick at home and in the hospital. Remind publishers that it is beneficial to state during hospital admission that they would welcome a visit from a minister of Jehovah’s Witnesses. This will ensure that *both* congregation elders and members of the PVG gain access to provide assistance.—Note the announcement in the September 2008 issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry* (*km* 5/13 for all local languages in Ghana).