



User Name: Password:
 Remember Me [Forgot your username or password? | Subscribe](#)

As of Friday, May 16, 2008

Set My Home Page | Customer Service

News Today's Newspaper My Online Journal Multimedia & Online Extras Markets Data & Tools Classifieds

OTHER FREE CONTENT FROM THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

EDITORS' PICKS

[Fine Weather for a Novel](#)
[Get Your Grill On](#)
[Disenchanted in Michigan](#)
[Summer Reading](#)
[New Green Fees](#)
[Beautiful Country](#)
[Summertime Cocktail](#)
[MORE EDITORS' PICKS](#)

BLOGS

Most Popular Posts

- 1.
2. [Economists React: Housing Weakness 'Far From Over'](#)
3. [Buzz Links: NYC Welcomes 'Telectroscope'; 'Indiana Jones' Reality Check](#)
4. [The Wall Street Diet: Three Breakfasts and No Time for Exercise](#)

[SEE ALL BLOGS](#)**MORE FREE CONTENT**

[» Personal Journal](#)
[» Personal Finance](#)
[» Leisure](#)
[» Markets Data Center](#)
[» Video](#)
[» Blogs](#)
[» Forums](#)
[» Interactives](#)
[» Autos](#)
[» Career Journal](#)
[» Real Estate](#)
[» Small Business](#)
[» OpinionJournal](#)
[» MarketWatch](#)
[» AllThingsDigital](#)

OPINION**Why We Need a Market for Human Organs**

By SALLY SATEL
 May 16, 2008; Page A11

Gavin Carney, an Australian nephrologist, held a press conference in Canberra recently to urge that people be allowed to sell their kidneys. "The current system isn't working," he was quoted in the Sydney Morning Herald. "We've tried everything to drum up support" for organ donation, but "people just don't seem willing to give their organs away for free."

For \$50,000, however, some Australians probably would donate organs. This is the amount that Dr. Carney, a professor at the Australian National University, suggests the federal government, "with proper ethical controls," should offer willing donors. He would have the government repeal the ban on kidney sales so it can purchase and distribute organs to patients languishing on dialysis.

Dr. Carney wants to keep desperate patients away from black markets. But until the kidney shortage is resolved, patients in Australia – along with those in countries all over the developed world – will continue to resort to them. The World Health Organization estimates that 5% to 10% of all transplants performed annually take place in the clinical netherworlds of China, Pakistan, Egypt, Colombia and the Philippines.

Because of the global organ shortage, thousands of patients die unnecessarily each year for want of a kidney. (In my case, I was lucky to have received a kidney from a friend.) And because organ sales are illicit, corrupt brokers may deceive indigent donors about the nature of transplant surgery, cheat them of payment, and ignore their postsurgical needs and long-term complications. The only way out is to increase the supply of available kidneys – whether by a cash payment to potential donors or through some other form of compensation.

Unfortunately, most of the world transplant establishment does not share this view. Instead, organizations such as the WHO and the international Transplantation Society focus on the obliteration of illicit markets.

The latest country to "get tough" is the Philippines. A few weeks ago, the government banned the sale of kidneys to foreigners. The reverberations are already being felt; a recent headline in the Jerusalem Post read, "Kidney Transplant Candidates in Limbo after Philippines Closes Gates." (Israel has one of the lowest rates of donation in the world, so the government pays for transplant surgery performed outside the country.)

Similarly, patients from Qatar who traveled to Manila are "looking for alternative solutions," according to The Peninsula. Many had turned to the Philippines because countries such as China, India and Pakistan have begun cracking down on illicit organ sales.

But the prohibition policy urged on these countries will only end up pushing organ markets further underground, or cause them to blossom elsewhere. World health authorities should direct their passion toward promoting a legal apparatus for exchange.

And find out if your advice is right.

[POST NOW >>](#)

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL Allstate

★ POLITICAL DIARY NEWSLETTER ★

For only \$3.95/mo. [SIGN UP NOW](#)
 That's less than \$1 per week!

MORE FROM TODAY'S JOURNAL

\$ Subscription may be required | [Subscribe Now](#)

PEOPLE WHO READ THIS...

Also read these stories:

[Burma's Junta Will Survive the Cyclone](#)
[Gay Marriage Returns](#)
[A Welcome, Not a Wall](#)
[The State of the Union? Furious.](#)
[Political War Games](#)

Recommendations sponsored by:

people **i** ready

NEW! Are you on Facebook?

See what content on this site is popular with your friends! [Learn more >](#)

Your Facebook Friends Are Reading

A Morgan Stanley Crusader
 Seen by 9 friends | 2 groups | Washington D.C.
U.S. Spurs G-7 Effort to Bolster Dollar
 Seen by 10 friends | 2 groups | Harvard
Few Investors Back Say-on-Pay Plans
 Seen by 3 friends | Day Traders | Stanford

Provided by **SeenThis**
 by loornia

▶ WHAT'S NEWS

- [Greenberg Probe Looks at Two Deals](#)
- [Bid for Anheuser-Busch?](#)
- [Indonesia Raises Its Fuel Prices](#)
- [Clinton Apologizes for RFK Remark](#)

Open Now Member FDIC

ING DIRECT
Save Your MoneyThe Orange
Savings
Account3.00%
APYNo Fees.
No Minimums.

To do so, they'll have to relinquish some gross misconceptions.

One is that a legal system of exchange will inevitably replicate the sins of unauthorized markets. "We don't want to open up that type of exploitation," warned Nicola Roxon, Australia's federal minister for health, when she heard Dr. Carney's proposal. But he is not promoting a free-for-all. His goal is a regulated, transparent regime backed by the rule of law and devoted to donor protection.

Another misconception is that a compensation system inevitably preys on desperate people. "They will be the only ones who would put up their hands," said Dr. Tim Matthews, the head of the advocacy group Kidney Health Australia.

One way to circumvent this risk is by not catering to desperate people. A model system could establish a months-long period of medical screening and education. By providing in-kind rewards financed by the government – such as a down payment on a house (one of Dr. Carney's suggestions), a contribution to a retirement fund, or lifetime health insurance – the program would not be attractive to people who might otherwise rush to flawed judgment (and surgery) on the promise of a large sum of instant cash.

Would prospective donors lie about their health to be eligible for compensation? An irrelevant worry in the context of regulated exchanges, since they would have to undergo rigorous medical testing over several months, which is the standard of care for altruistic donors. And donors or health-care professionals would be legally liable for any harm suffered by a patient as the result of receiving a diseased or substandard organ.

The way to stop illicit transactions – and the depredations of underground markets – is to sanction legal exchanges.

Dr. Satel is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and editor of the forthcoming "When Altruism Isn't Enough -- The Case for Compensating Kidney Donors" (AEI).

See all of today's editorials and op-eds, plus video commentary, on [Opinion Journal](#).

And add your comments to the [Opinion Journal](#) forum.

Sponsored Links

Home Equity Loans-Fast

Approving 4 out of 5 homeowners with our fast funding in-house bank.
www.paramountequity.com

\$100K+ Finance Jobs

Tons of \$100K+ Finance Jobs
www.netshare.com

See Today's Mortgage Rates

Fed Cuts Rates to 2.00%! \$285,000 Refi for \$980/mo. No SSN req.
www.MortgageRatesExperts.com

RELATED ARTICLES FROM ACROSS THE WEB

Related Content may require a subscription | [Subscribe Now](#) -- Get 2 Weeks FREE

Related Articles from WSJ.com

- [Medical Marijuana Users Denied Organ Transplants](#) May. 19, 2008

Related Web News

- [Are Kidneys A Commodity?](#) May. 17, 2008 [newsweek.com](#)
- [1 dies, 1 ill after receiving kidneys - The Boston Globe](#) May. 13, 2008 [boston.com](#)

[More related content](#) Powered by [Sphere](#)

[EMAIL THIS](#) [FORMAT FOR PRINTING](#) [MOST POPULAR](#) [ORDER REPRINTS](#)

[YAHOO! BUZZ](#) [DIGG THIS](#) [+MY SPACE](#) [Get RSS Feeds](#) [GET RSS FEEDS](#)

[Return To Top](#)

WSJ Digital Network:

[MarketWatch](#) | [Barrons.com](#)

[AllThingsDigital](#) | [Dow Jones News Alerts](#) | [MORE](#)

[Subscribe](#) [Log In](#) [Take a Tour](#) [Contact Us](#) [Help](#) [Email Setup](#) [Customer Service: Online](#) | [Print](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) [Subscriber Agreement & Terms of Use](#) [Copyright Policy](#) [Mobile Devices](#) [RSS Feeds](#)

[News Licensing](#) [Advertising](#) [About Dow Jones](#)

- [Bharti Calls Off Talks with MTN](#)

[MORE](#)

▶ WHAT'S POPULAR

1. [Opinion: Sex and the Sissy](#)
2. [Opinion: Republicans and Our Enemies](#)
3. [Opinion: The Obama Learning Curve](#)
4. [Home Resales Fall, Inventories Surge](#)
5. [Opinion: The Death of Conservatism Is Greatly Exaggerated](#)

[MORE](#)

Copyright © 2008 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

