

Minister wants new organ donation rules



Carina Melchior whose condition was portrayed in the DR documentary 'The girl who refused to die'. - Foto: DR

A DR documentary showing a young woman waking up when thought to be close to brain death, has prompted a call for new rules.

The health minister has called for new rules on when families can be asked to donate a comatose family member's organs following a DR documentary in which a young woman, who was claimed to be close to brain death, woke up again.

Health Minister Astrid Krag says she wants clear and uniform rules for when doctors may discuss organ donations with patient families.

"I will be asking the Health Board to make sure there are uniform guidelines at all hospitals. I am happy that Aarhus University Hospital has introduced a procedure so we do not have a repeat of the Melchior family's experience," Krag says.

Doctors at the hospital misjudged 19-year-old Carina's condition and had discussed, and received the family's acceptance that their daughter's organs could be donated. The young woman had been involved in a serious car accident.

During the documentary, medical staff told the family that Carina was almost, and would soon be brain dead and in response to a paternal question as to whether there was even a small chance 'of a miracle' was told there was not.

The girl woke up, however, soon after and following intensive re-training, now lives in her own monitored flat, is horse riding again and is able to carry out her own domestic duties.

"Health personnel misjudged Carina and discussed organ donation with her parents based on the wrong information," Krag says adding: "The conversation should not be held until brain death has actually taken place."