

OPTN Policy Notice

Frameworks for Organ Distribution

Sponsoring Committee:	Ad Hoc Geography Committee
Policy/Bylaws Affected:	None
Public Comment:	July 31, 2018 – October 2, 2018
Board Approval Date:	December 4, 2018
Effective Date:	December 4, 2018

Problem Statement

The Ad Hoc Geography Committee was formed in December 2017 to examine the geographic distribution of organs. The Committee was charged with:

- Establishing defined guiding principles for the use of geographic constraints in organ allocation
- Reviewing and recommending models for incorporating geographic principles into allocation policies
- Identifying uniform concepts for organ specific allocation policies in light of the requirements of the OPTN Final Rule

The OPTN Final Rule sets requirements for allocation policies developed by the OPTN, including sound medical judgement, best use of organs, to avoid wasting organs, and to promote efficiency.¹ The Final Rule also includes a requirement that policies “shall not be based on the candidate’s place of residence or place of listing, except to the extent required” by the other requirements of the Rule.

On June 11, 2018, the OPTN Board of Directors adopted principles to guide future organ transplant policy relating to geographic aspects of organ distribution. Additionally, the Board of Directors accepted the Ad Hoc Geography Committee’s recommendation to request community feedback on the recommended distribution frameworks, with a goal of identifying a single, preferred distribution framework to be used across organs. This proposal recommends one distribution framework identified by the Ad Hoc Geography Committee as being in alignment with the adopted principles of geographic distribution and the OPTN Final Rule. The use of a single, unified framework across all organ types will minimize inefficiencies in research, policy development, and IT implementation of policy changes and reduce operation differences for patients that are not based on clinical differences.

Summary of Changes

1. The Board adopted the Continuous Distribution allocation framework as best suited for future OPTN organ allocation policies; and
2. The Board directed the organ-specific committees to move toward the Continuous Distribution allocation framework as they consider future amendments and improvements to their respective allocation policies. The work currently underway in the liver, kidney/pancreas, thoracic, and Vascularized Composite Allograft (VCA) committees serves to move in a step-wise fashion towards a unified continuous distribution framework. The Board and the OPTN Policy Oversight Committee will continue to monitor the progress of the organ-specific committees as they move towards a unified framework in the next few years.

What Members Need to Do

This Board directive requires no member action.

¹ 42 C.F.R. §121.8(a).

Affected Policy Language

None