

OPTN Ad Hoc International Relations Committee

Meeting Summary

June 28, 2022

Conference Call

Barry Friedman, RN, BSN, MBA, CPTC, Chair

Pramod Bonde, MD, Vice Chair

Introduction

The OPTN Ad Hoc International Relations Committee (Committee) met via Citrix GoTo Meeting teleconference on 06/28/2022 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Member Recognition
2. Discussion: Project Ideas

The following is a summary of the Committee's discussions.

1. Member Recognition

The Committee recognized the service of the members whose Committee terms are ending.

2. Discussion: Project Ideas

The Committee worked to refine their project idea.

Summary of discussion:

A member stated that it will be important for the Committee to understand the barriers that individuals encounter when trying to enter the United States to become a living donor. HRSA staff suggested that the Committee may benefit from speaking with the OPTN Transplant Coordinator Committee (TCC). The Chair agreed and suggested collaboration from the OPTN Living Donor Committee as well.

Another member stated that the barriers depend on what country the individual is traveling from. The member noted that often times European citizens have an easier time obtaining a visa to come to the United States to become a living donor while individuals from developing countries will often be declined for the visa even if they are first-degree related to the transplant candidate. The member stated that they have spoken with United States consulate who have shared their biggest concern is ensuring that the individual is not donating a kidney in exchange of anything of value. Additionally, it was noted that individuals will be evaluated for a visa dependent on the potential transplant recipient's insurance coverage. The member explained that the United States consulate seeks to ensure that there is insurance coverage for the potential living donor in regards to transplantation surgery, follow-up care, and possible complications. The Chair stated that this data would be important to collect in order to systematically capture the barriers in order to help international living donors.

Another member added that speaking directly with embassies in identified countries may be beneficial in understanding the barriers. HRSA staff suggested that the State Department and the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) may also be beneficial.

The Chair suggested the Committee consider non-citizen/U.S. resident population who may be fearful to step forward as a living donor. A member responded that, in their experience, the concern is insurance coverage more than it is fear of deportation. The member explained that for pediatric candidates, the

insurance will coverage the donation, but the possibility of complications post-donation is the concern because of lack of insurance coverage.

The Vice Chair suggested that data should be collected on all living donor candidates. A member suggested that idea should be relayed to the OPTN Living Donor Committee.

Another member suggested that general education to transplant programs on the topic of transplantation and international candidates, recipients, and living donors would be beneficial. The member explained that there appears to be general misunderstanding on the ability to transplant international patients.

Another member shared literature relevant to this topic.^{1,2,3,4}

Upcoming Meetings

- July 26, 2022 (teleconference)
- August 23, 2022 (teleconference)

¹Hartsock JA, Helft PR. International Travel for Living Donor Kidney Donation: A Proposal for Focused Screening of Vulnerable Groups. *Transplantation*. 2019 Dec;103(12):2576-2581. doi: 10.1097/TP.0000000000002875.

² Al Ammary F, Thomas AG, Massie AB, Muzaale AD, Shaffer AA, Koons B, Qadi MA, Crews DC, Garonzik-Wang J, Fang H, Brennan DC, Lentine KL, Segev DL, Henderson ML. The landscape of international living kidney donation in the United States. *Am J Transplant*. 2019 Jul;19(7):2009-2019. doi: 10.1111/ajt.15256.

³ Shukhman E, Hunt J, LaPointe-Rudow D, Mandelbrot D, Hays RE, Kumar V, Schaefer H, Al Ammary F, Henderson ML, Nishio-Lucar A, Cooper M, Lentine KL. Evaluation and care of international living kidney donor candidates: Strategies for addressing common considerations and challenges. *Clin Transplant*. 2020 Mar;34(3):e13792. doi: 10.1111/ctr.13792.

⁴ Lentine KL, Motter JD, Henderson ML, Hays RE, Shukhman E, Hunt J, Al Ammary F, Kumar V, LaPointe Rudow D, Van Pilsum Rasmussen SE, Nishio-Lucar AG, Schaefer HM, Cooper M, Mandelbrot DA. Care of international living kidney donor candidates in the United States: A survey of contemporary experience, practice, and challenges. *Clin Transplant*. 2020 Nov;34(11):e14064. doi: 10.1111/ctr.14064.

Attendance

- **Committee Members**
 - Abby Ruiz
 - Barry Friedman
 - Chang Liu
 - Min Zhou
 - Nancy Long
 - Peter Stock
 - Pramod Bonde
- **SRTR Representatives**
 - Bryn Thompson
- **HRSA Representatives**
 - Jim Bowman
 - Marilyn Levi
 - Vanessa Arriola
- **UNOS Staff**
 - Meghan McDermott
 - Robert Hunter
 - Tamika Qualls
- **Other Attendees**
 - Eliana Agudelo
 - Natalie Alderete
 - Scott Sanoff