

OPTN Ad Hoc International Relations Committee

Meeting Summary

May 24, 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 05/24/2022 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Discussion: Project Ideas

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

1. Discussion: Project Ideas

The Committee worked to refine their project idea.

Summary of discussion:

The Committee expressed interest in reviewing donation after circulatory death (DCD) practices in the international transplant community. The Chair suggested this topic would be based on a review of literature to learn how to improve DCD practices nationally. Additionally, the Chair suggested that the Committee may contact international organ procurement organizations (OPOs) to ask about various DCD practices and policies.

The Committee also expressed interest in reviewing best practices related to evaluation, acceptance, and follow up of international living donors. The Chair suggested the Committee may work on both topics at the same time.

The Chair stated that data on international living donors would be beneficial to the Committee, such as how many international living donors come to the United States each year. Additionally, the Chair noted that data showing where international living donors travel from may be important in understanding the population. The Chair stated that the intention of such a project would be to help develop processes to encourage living donors to come forward in a safe manner.

A member suggested contacting transplant programs to understand what type of guidance is needed. The Chair suggested that identifying transplant programs that perform the high rates of transplants with international living donors may be important. The member responded that identifying transplant programs that refrain from utilizing international living donors may also be important in understanding the current state of barriers. The member added a formal needs assessment may be appropriate.

The Chair stated that the Committee will need to consider donor coercion and illegal exchange while reviewing the topic of international living donors. The Vice Chair suggested the Committee could refine the scope to international living donors who are related to the transplant recipient. A member responded that keeping the scope broad will help ensure addressing the safety of all living donors, regardless if they are related to the recipient or not. The Vice Chair stated it will be important to ensure that the guidance the Committee provides is grounded in evidence.

A member suggested prioritizing common barriers in order to develop an effective guidance document. Another member stated that the biggest barrier for international living donors may be access to obtaining visas. The member also suggested considering the standard of care in international communities. The Vice Chair suggested the Committee may create a document for state departments that issues guidance regarding visas and international living donors.

The Chair stated that improving access for international living donors will help impact transplant candidates by increasing access to higher quality organs. A member agreed and stated that it would align with the primary strategic goal of increasing equity in access to transplants.

HRSA staff suggested it may be helpful for the Committee to distinguish between an international living donor who travels to the United States for a transplant candidate that is a United States citizen compared to living donor and transplant candidate both traveling to the United States for transplant.

The Committee provided information for a project form:

- Concern with the current system
 - Lack of understanding on how to evaluate and accept international living donors
 - Low rates of follow-up for international living donors
 - Protecting the safety of living donors
- Evidence concerning the impacted population
 - Community input highlighting lack of understanding on the ability to accept international living donors
 - Data showing low rates of follow-up for living donors
- Project Category
 - Guidance document
- Vulnerable Populations
 - Citizenship status
 - Economically deprived areas
 - Public insurance and uninsured groups
 - Race/ethnicity
 - Adults with high school education or less
- Primary strategic goal
 - Promote living donor and transplant recipient safety

Next steps:

The Committee will continue discussing and refining project ideas.

Upcoming Meetings

- June 28, 2022 (teleconference)

Attendance

- **Committee Members**
 - Abby Ruiz
 - Barry Friedman
 - Chang Liu
 - Min Zhou
 - Prakash Rao
 - Pramod Bonde
 - Sylvia Villalon
- **SRTR Representatives**
 - Bryn Thompson
- **HRSA Representatives**
 - Jim Bowman
 - Marilyn Levi
- **UNOS Staff**
 - Meghan McDermott
 - Robert Hunter
- **Other Attendees**
 - Scott Sanoff