

**OPTN/UNOS Ethics Committee  
Report to the Board of Directors  
November 12-13, 2014  
St. Louis, MO**

**Peter Reese, MD, Chair  
Elisa Gordon, PhD, MPH, Vice Chair**

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*This report reflects of the work of the OPTN/UNOS Ethics Committee between April 2014 and September 2014.*

**Action Items**

None

**Committee Projects**

**1. General Principles of Pediatric Allocation**

Public Comment: *N/A*

Board Consideration: *November 2014*

The Ethics Committee contributed to the General Principles of Pediatric Allocation project. The project will produce a companion document to the OPTN's Principles of Organ Allocation, which the Ethics Committee has updated over several years, with a specific focus on pediatric allocation. The Ethics Committee provided the Pediatric Committee with the framework and background of these principles. For more information, see the **Pediatric Transplantation Committee's report to the Board**.

**2. Imminent Death Donation**

Public Comment: *N/A*

Board Consideration: *December 2015*

The Committee has discussed imminent death donation (IDD) during previous meetings and the Chair of the Committee has presented this topic to the Living Donor Committee. Imminent death donation involves the removal of transplantable organs prior to an imminent, planned withdrawal of support expected to result in death and is a donation alternative to donation after cardiac death for patients who are not brain dead.

The Committee is leading a work group with representatives from the OPO, Living Donor, and Operations and Safety Committees to investigate the ethical issues involved in surrogate consent of living donors. This work group held its first meeting on August 14, 2014, and the meeting included representatives from each of the three other committees.

During the meeting, work group members were unable to reach consensus regarding if IDD could be appropriate under any circumstance. Work group members were asked to discuss IDD with their committees to gauge the opinions of their committees on this subject during

their fall meetings. The work group will meet again in the near future to review feedback from these conversations.

### **3. Review White Papers for Accuracy and Relevancy**

Public Comment: *N/A*

Board Consideration: *June 2015*

The Committee has developed a series of white papers on bioethical issues that are available on the [OPTN website](#). Some of the topics addressed in the white papers include:

- An Evaluation of the Ethics of Presumed Consent
- Financial Incentives for Organ Donation
- The Ethics of Organ Donation from Condemned Prisoners

These resources have not been regularly reviewed to ensure they remain accurate and relevant. In response, the Committee will review the white papers for accuracy and relevancy. The Committee plans to determine if each white paper should be maintained in its current form, is in need of minor or major revision or should be eliminated because it is no longer relevant.

The Ethics Committee will hold monthly recurring web conferences to address this project. The Committee is planning to ask the Board to consider some of the revised white papers in June 2015.

### **Committee Projects Pending Implementation**

None

### **Implemented Committee Projects**

None

### **Review of Public Comment Proposals**

The Committee reviewed 2 of the 17 proposals released for public comment from September – December, 2014.

### **4. Implementation of the OPTN's Oversight of Vascularized Composite Allografts (VCA)**

The Committee received an overview of vascularized composite allografts and the related policies scheduled for public comment.

The Chair of the VCA Committee joined the meeting by web conference to discuss the work of the VCA Committee to date and to address specific questions regarding VCA policy. The Committee was asked to specifically consider the option of living VCA donation. Most Committee members voiced concern with allowing VCA living donation, but agreed that the topic should be examined further. The Committee will prepare a formal response regarding the VCA policies during the public comment period.

**5. Proposal to Address the Requirements Outlined in the HIV Organ Policy Equity Act (HOPE Act)**

The Committee received information regarding the current medical practice concerning the care of HIV positive patients and an overview of the proposal concerning the HOPE Act. In general, the Committee supported the current proposal to permit research with HIV positive deceased donors. After a lengthy discussion, the Committee agreed to prepare a formal response regarding the proposal during the public comment period.

**Other Committee Work**

**6. Redesigning Liver Distribution to Address Geographical Disparities in Access**

The Vice Chair of the Liver Committee attended the Ethics Committee meeting to provide a presentation on potential future changes to the liver distribution system. The Committee will continue to monitor potential future changes to the liver allocation system focusing on potential ethical implications.

**7. Potential New Projects**

The Committee discussed and supported proposing two new areas of work for consideration by the Policy Oversight Committee and Board of Directors:

- Consider if living donor recovery programs should be responsible for providing care for post-operative complications
- Explore financial incentives or the removal of disincentives for organ donation

**Meeting Summaries**

The Committee held meetings on the following dates:

- September 15, 2014

Meetings summaries for this Committee are available on the OPTN website at: <http://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/converge/members/committeesDetail.asp?ID=3>.