

**OPTN/UNOS Ethics Committee
Meeting Summary
April 13, 2015
Chicago, IL**

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

Discussions of the full committee on April 13, 2015 are summarized below and will be reflected in the committee's next report to the OPTN/UNOS Board of Directors. Meeting summaries and reports to the Board are available at <http://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/>.

Committee Projects

1. Ethical Principles to be Considered in the Allocation of Human Organs

The OPTN website provides access to thirteen white papers developed by the Ethics Committee. The oldest white paper on the site was approved in 1993, and it is unclear when the resources have been reviewed for accuracy and relevancy. The Committee will review each of the white papers. Four papers have been reviewed and determined not to require revision. One paper is ready for Board reconsideration (Exhibit A). The remaining white papers will be updated and prepared for Board reconsideration over the next year.

2. Imminent Death Donation

The Committee continues to examine the ethical considerations of Imminent Death Donation (IDD).

Imminent death donation has occurred in the past but is currently prohibited under existing policy. 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 this issue. At this point, the path forward is unclear, as some members of the work group may not support IDD under any circumstances. In response the work group has identified the ethical or practical concerns that may need to be addressed in order for IDD to be considered as a potential new option for organ donation, including:

- Would IDD violate the Dead Donor Rule;
- How should the option for IDD be introduced to the donor family
- Who would provide surrogate consent; and
- Concerns with public perception

The work group is expected to prepare a report outlining areas of concern and proposed solutions that will be provided to the Committees represented on the work group for review and feedback.

The Committee plans to prepare a report for Board consideration in December 2015 and may need to consult the Board regarding the future direction of this project.

3. Review White Papers for Accuracy and Relevancy

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 has reviewed the white papers for accuracy and relevancy, and has determined 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 Committee reviewed the status of each white paper during its spring 2015 meeting and will continue to work on the white papers during a series of monthly conference calls. The Committee plans to have other revised white papers ready for Board consideration in December 2015.

4. Consider if Living Donor Recovery Programs Should be Responsible for Post-Operative Complications

This is a new project that should result in the development of a white paper or guidance document addressing the ethical issues concerning if and when living donor recovery hospitals should be responsible for providing care for post-operative complications. The resource could address who should be responsible for the cost of postoperative care.

When the Policy Oversight Committee approved this project it commented that the proposed project lacked evidence that a problem with donors not receiving post-operative care for complications existed. In response, the Committee consulted the Transplant Administrators, Transplant Coordinators, Patient Affairs and Living Donor Committees to ask these groups if they had knowledge or evidence of living donors who were either denied or were required to cover the cost of care for post-donation complications. All of these Committee responded commenting on the importance of this project. The Living Donor Committee responded that it had previously surveyed transplant programs that responded they would not cover the cost of post-operative complications.

The Committee had a lengthy discussion regarding how to advance this project during its spring 2015 meeting, and several Committee members volunteered to work on this project.

Review of Public Comment Proposals

5. The Committee reviewed and provided comments on two proposal during the spring 2015 public comment period.

- Proposal to Address the Requirements Outlined in the HIV Organ Policy Equity Act (Organ Procurement Organization Committee)
- Membership Requirements for VCA Transplant Programs (Vascularized Composite Allograft Committee)

Other Significant Items

6. VCA Guidance Documents

Members of the Ethics Committee are participating on a multi-committee work group developing a resource to provide guidance on VCA living donation. The Committee reviewed the current draft and was invited to send comments to the Committee leadership who will combine the comments and submit feedback to the VCA guidance document work group.

7. Pediatric Lung Policy Preview

A member of the Pediatric Committee presented an overview of a pediatric lung allocation policy during the Committee April in-person meeting. The Committee was asked to provide feedback concerning the ethical implication of two different allocation sequences under consideration by the Pediatric and Thoracic Committees.

8. Redesigning Liver Distribution to Address Geographical Disparities in Access

The Vice Chair of the Liver Committee provided a liver redistricting update during the Committee's April in-person meeting. The Committee will continue to monitor future changes to the liver allocation system focusing on potential ethical implications.

Upcoming Meeting

- September 28, 2015 – Full Committee Meeting