

OPTN/UNOS Liver and Intestinal Organ Transplantation Committee
Meeting Summary
June 23, 2015
Chicago, Illinois

David Mulligan, MD, Chair
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Discussions of the full committee on June 23, 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. Redesigning Liver Distribution

Following the September, 2014 Public Forum on Redesigning Liver Distribution the Committee established three Ad Hoc Subcommittees to address the three key focus areas: metrics to assess geographic disparity, logistical/transportation considerations, and financial issues as they related to the Liver Committee's specific quest to reduce geographic variation in severity of illness at transplant. Additionally, the Committee revived and repurposed an earlier subcommittee to address this topic in a parallel effort to redesigning liver distribution, to identify issues that may apply broadly to overall system improvement.

The Ad Hocs were purposefully composed partly of members of the committee and partly of additional subject matter experts with diverse opinions, differing expertise and representation of a variety of populations served as well as regions. Each of the Ad Hocs was tasked with deliberating, completing additional analyses and developing data driven and consensus based recommendations to be shared with the full committee and subsequently the community by spring 2015 to aid in refinement of existing concepts or development of new ones. Nearly 200 people attended the forum in person and approximately 210 more participated via webinar.

The analyses and recommendations presented included:

- A modified Redistricting concept which incorporated proximity circles of 150 miles vs. 250 miles around the donor hospitals with an additional 3 vs. 5 MELD points assigned to those candidates that fell within those proximity circles for priority.
- Guidelines on best practices in broader sharing focused primarily on establishing and maintain working relationships, making organ offers, reviewing and accepting organ offers, establishing hard back-ups, recommendations on transportation and the logistics of the organ recovery process.
- An updated economic analyses which incorporated the differential in cost to transplant centers and OPOs for acquisition of livers as a function of distance, specifically acquisition of livers locally compared to acquisition of livers regionally and nationally. This updated analyses also incorporated UHC data to more accurately reflect the true costs associated with transplant and transplant center expenditures.

- Several system improvements that would enhance the current allocation and distribution system and be vital to the success of any model of broader sharing. These recommendations focused on narrowing the liver acceptance criteria, implementing a multi-variate screening tool, an expedited donor placement profile for marginal donors, and increasing the number of simultaneous offers an OPO can make while restricting the number of offers a center can accept per candidate.

Independent speakers presented alternate metrics of disparity for consideration, a history of previous community efforts to increase donation and an alternative concept for broader sharing utilizing the current 11 regions and concentric circles with proximity points.

The Committee met the day following the Forum to debrief and determine a path forward. It was clear to members that no policy proposal should be immediately forthcoming and based on the ideas and questions raised by the community, further work was warranted.

The Committee unanimously resolved both to consider additional results in modeling of concepts previously developed and to further analyze an additional concept. Based on significant feedback, these additional analyses will include variation in candidates' lab MELD/PELD score at transplant, to evaluate the results without the bias of varying exception point practices across the country.

Also based on community input, the Committee agreed to further investigate the newly proposed concept of using concentric circles based on the donor location, with additional proximity points given to local candidates. The Committee resolved unanimously to model the concept of 500-mile concentric circles from the donor location, with additional priority given at radii of 150 and 250 miles and to continue the emphasis on assessing the cost and transportation implications of any system of broader sharing.

The Committee will continue to provide updates as the requested analyses become available.

Upcoming Meeting

- July, 2015