

OPTN/UNOS Operations and Safety Committee
Meeting Summary
August 25, 2015
Conference Call

Theresa Daly, Chair
David Marshman, Vice Chair

Discussions of the full committee on August 25, 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>.

Review of Public Comment Proposals

1. Proposal to Increase OPTN/UNOS Committee Terms to Three Years (Policy Oversight Committee (POC))

Committee members expressed general support but identified some specific concerns over the proposal. On the positive side, the three-year term will provide adequate time for new members to learn the processes and workings of committee service. It will allow new members to “find their voice” so that they can meaningfully contribute. A longer term will contribute to the overall efficiency of the group. In a three-year term, a member can accomplish more than a two-year turn. The OSC had voted to support the idea when it was presented earlier this year prior to becoming a formal proposal.

One issue mentioned was the need to have an effective mechanism to deal with members who are unable to participate, do not demonstrate interest, or do not adequately contribute. This can weigh a committee down. It was noted that there is a process to deal with this issue. If a committee has difficult dynamics, then longer terms will just extend dysfunctional dynamics. Another concern voiced was that the longer turnover period would provide challenges in getting new people and ideas into the system and limit overall opportunities.

2. Proposal to Establish and Clarify Policy Requirements for Therapeutic Organ Donation (Living Donor Committee)

It was noted that it might be difficult to identify negative outcomes within the current system and it would be important to track how these recipients fare relative to others. While the therapeutic and domino donor cases may be rare, some members did have some knowledge or experience with the practice. The discussed examples were treated as full living donors and this was challenging or did not seem to fit. It was noted that it might cause someone not to want to donate due to complex requirements and that living donor policy may not make sense in these situations. An organ is going to be removed regardless. If the burden can be safely lowered, then it makes sense to adopt this proposal.

3. Simultaneous Liver Kidney (SLK) Allocation Policy (Kidney Transplantation Committee)

Committee members did not reach consensus on this proposal but all agreed that something needs to be done to address the issue. It was expressed that the kidney community has concerns about these organs being siphoned off without justification while those on the kidney-alone list who have legitimate needs are passed over. One member opined that the kidneys in SLKs are often given to those with adequate kidney function. There was concern that in some sequences the SLK safety net would get any priority over kidney-alone candidates who might have greater needs and actually be on dialysis.

It was noted that there are no current guidelines and that keeping the status quo will continue perpetuating the issue. It seems as though there will be over 600 SLKs this year.

There was discussion over whether the proposal would increase or decrease the number of SLKs. One member indicated it could increase unnecessary SLKs because if someone meets medical criteria they may feel entitled. The diagnosis of chronic kidney failure can vary greatly by transplant nephrologists. On the other hand the proposal will address situations where SLK is done to avoid being counted in SRTR calculated outcomes data or those done without any justification. It will also challenge the liver community as the evidence reviewed did not support common beliefs. Mortality due to renal insufficiency was not as high as many might believe. Overall the Committee desires to see a reduction in unnecessary SLKs although some may not agree with all of the points proposed.

Upcoming Meeting(s)

- September 22, 2015 (teleconference meeting)