

OPTN/UNOS Ad-Hoc Geography Committee Minutes
Meeting Minutes
October 23, 2018
Conference Call

Kevin O'Connor, MD, Chair

Introduction

The Ad-Hoc Geography Committee met via GoToTraining teleconference on 10/23/2018 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. State-Based Allocation Framework Discussion
2. Public Comment Analysis and Discussion
3. Geographic Framework (Voting Item)

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

1. State-Based Allocation Framework Discussion

The Committee heard from Dr. Raymond Lynch of the Emory University School of Medicine on his proposal for a state-based system of organ allocation during their October 23rd meeting. The committee was critical of the proposed model's alignment with the OPTN Final Rule. Furthermore, members were critical of whether the method is legally defensible. Members of the committee posited whether there was any difference between the state-based approach and a less-customizable variant of the districts / neighborhoods approach. Finally, committee members noted inherent variability in state size and the number of programs per state that could cause significant advantages and disadvantages based solely on geography.

2. Public Comment Analysis and Discussion

The Committee reviewed the major themes of more than one hundred comments received during the public comment period and engaged in a discussion surrounding the feedback. The Committee reiterated its charge from the Board to select a unified framework and create consistent and rational future policy. Members considered the reality of implementing the chosen framework so closely to the new frameworks currently being modeled and deliberated by the organ specific committees. Members recognize that the chosen framework can implement characteristics of the current frameworks into the new chosen framework and bolster efforts to communicate and educate the greater transplant community on the benefits.

Members recognize that organ-specific committees will have to carefully consider and model the selected framework based on the unique biological characteristics and transportation realities of each organ. One of the biggest concerns that committee members heard outside of public comment is the significance of their recommendation and confusion as to why the committee was selecting a single framework. Members noted that if the Board adopts a preferred framework, the Executive Committee and Policy Oversight Committee would develop a timeline for transition to a unified framework.

The Executive Committee and POC regularly discuss the approval and prioritization of committee projects. Allocation and distribution-related projects would take priority in the context of all other requests for committee projects. Transitioning all organ distribution to a common framework constitutes a long-term efficiency project; it will not be work undertaken in response to a current legal or clinical risk. Therefore, there is flexibility in how the organ-specific committees implement the selected framework.

Furthermore, the committee stated that a single OPTN distribution framework is necessary for the long-term efficiency benefits. The current system uses multiple frameworks for distribution, and this complicates cross-organ analysis. A single framework will make it easier to explain the system to the public, which can increase trust in the system. It can also facilitate analysis of the system by UNOS, SRTR, and other researchers. Use of a single framework should shorten the time necessary to identify issues in the allocation systems and to develop solutions for those issues. A single framework will also facilitate faster IT programming and solution implementation.

3. Geographic Framework Vote (Voting Item)

Vote

Which Framework Should The Geography Committee Adopt?

- 87% voted for Continuous Distribution
- 13% voted for Fixed Concentric Circles

Upcoming Meetings

- November 27, 2018 Teleconference
- December 18, 2018 Teleconference