

OPTN/UNOS Transplant Administrators Committee (TAC)
Meeting Minutes
February 27, 2019
Conference Call

James E. Pittman, Chair
Nancy Metzler Vice Chair

Introduction

The Transplant Administrators Committee met via Citrix GoTo Meeting Teleconference on 02/27/2019 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. TAC's public comment on proposal: Expedited Placement of Livers.
2. TAC's public comment on guidance document: Guidance of Effective Practices in Broader Distribution.
3. TAC's feedback on UNOS Research: 2018 CMS SOW Quality Improvement Activity.
4. Follow-up discussion of public comment for concept paper: Eliminate the use of DSAs and Regions from Kidney and Pancreas Distribution.

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

1. TAC's public comment on proposal: Expedited Placement of Livers.

The Organ Procurement Organization (OPO) Committee asked for TAC's feedback and questions on their proposal. This proposal aims to establish a uniform protocol that will most efficiently transplant late turned down livers.

Data summary:

Attached is the proposal from the OPTN website.

https://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/media/2805/opo_publiccomment_20190122.pdf

Summary of discussion:

- Concerns were raised surrounding the unwillingness of surgeons to carry out a procurement that is not their own. The committee asked how this common problem would be resolved and what action would be taken if the organ arrived damaged or not as advertised.
 - These topics were acknowledged as challenges. Technology, such as pictures and video, along with the use of current standing policy were given as answers to questions about damaged organs.
- TAC agreed with the OPO and transplant center workgroups who believe that the reason for late turned down livers should be clearly stated and not only represented by a generic code. TAC also favored 30 minutes over the proposed 20 minute timeframe to make a decision on an expedited liver.
 - It was reported that the transplant surgeons in the work group suggested 20 minutes, but much of the feedback from public comment prefers 30 minutes.
- TAC expressed concern about the monitoring of listing practices for expedited livers. They questioned how these practices would be carried out in such time-sensitive scenarios. They also expressed their thought on expedited livers, calling them a niche transplantation procedure because four centers receive about 50% of all expedited livers. The committee believes these few centers may accept so many livers due to their

level of skill and/or aggressiveness. They also asked for the outcomes from these centers. They questioned how participation data is gathered.

- The presenter responded that the work group also cares about these issues and looks to compare how many offers centers will take compared to how many offers they receive. He also commented that the SRTR data could be helpful for this and they usually find out about participation through individual conversations with centers.
- TAC recommended that centers intentionally think about participation in this program. They expressed concern about possible situations where newly participating centers could be the first to accept, but then ultimately do not use the expedited liver.

Next steps:

UNOS Staff will draft a public comment for TAC based upon the feedback shared. The draft will be sent to the chair and vice chair for further editing before UNOS staff post the comment on behalf of the committee during the public comment.

2. TAC's public comment on guidance document: Guidance of Effective Practices in Broader Distribution.

The Operations and Safety Committee asked for TAC's feedback and questions on their guidance document. This document aims to provide recommendations for the broader allocation of organs. Operations and Safety asked for specific feedback to the question, "Does the transplant community support additional data collection necessary for OPTN Committee to evaluate the logistical impact of broader distribution?" It was also prefaced that the transplant community found the financial portions of this document inappropriate. TAC was informed that this caused the document to be pulled from the consent agenda to the discussion agenda.

Data summary:

Attached is the guidance document from the OPTN website.

https://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/media/2806/osc_publiccomment_20190122.pdf

Summary of discussion:

- A committee member reported that he had been following the document's outcomes closely and had already seen an increase in the utilization of flights for organs.
- Another committee member mentioned that the idea of limited access to information about cost and transplant data was odd to him, as he reported that this information existed within the transplant centers. He followed this with the thought that these centers would be willing to discuss their data if asked.
 - The presenter reported that he supported this comment and that there was little consideration of that aspect. He mentioned that the general thought was that the travel and logistics cost would be offset by the rate at which sicker patients would be transplanted. These patients would not be in the hospital for as long waiting for a transplant.
 - The presenter agreed that the transplant centers are aware of some of the costs sometimes, but on other occasions the OPOs absorb those costs. He suggested looking at broader sharing of lungs study.
- A committee member reported that he had a publication out about fiscal impact of the lung program. He stated that the cost for lung transplant has gone up \$40K per case at

his particular center due to broader distribution. He believes there will be longer delays at OPOs due to going to multiple centers and that this could poorly impact timing.

- The presenter responded that he does not believe that information was considered enough and thinks cost will go up. He also believes there will be a shortage of planes and pilots.

Next Steps:

UNOS Staff will draft a public comment for TAC based upon the feedback shared. The draft will be sent to the chair and vice chair for further editing before UNOS staff post the comment on behalf of the committee during the public comment.

3. TAC's feedback on UNOS Research: 2018 CMS SOW Quality Improvement Activity.

Amber Wilk from UNOS Research Department asked for TAC's Feedback on waiting list trends. She asked the committee about their day to day experiences and if they believed there is a relationship between waitlist trends and the 2018 CMS SOW quality improvement activity.

Summary of discussion:

- A member commented that he was not sure that growing waitlists had much to do with CMS issues. He believes that an increase in the number of people on the waitlist has to do with the transplant center's desire to grow their program's volume.
- TAC members mentioned that they noticed an increase in referrals and called for more transparency from dialysis centers in regard to how many people are receiving these referrals.
- The committee identified the lack of transparency as a gap and expressed the need for more clarity with listing practices.

Next Steps:

UNOS will use this feedback to inform areas of improvement.

4. Follow-up discussion of public comment for concept paper: Eliminate the use of DSAs and Regions from Kidney and Pancreas Distribution.

TAC continued to draft their comment on Eliminate the use of DSAs and Regions from Kidney and Pancreas Distribution.

Data summary:

Attached is the concept paper from the OPTN website.

https://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/media/2802/kidney_pancreas_publiccomment_20190122.pdf

Summary of discussion:

- TAC expressed understanding that this concept paper aims to start a conversation and that the proposed solutions are not permanent.
- The committee expressed continued concern over all five proposed models that projected a decrease in the number of organs that will be transplanted.
- While the solutions look to increase equity and access, the committee believes that the projected decrease in the number of organs that will be transplanted goes against the final rule.
- TAC recommended that the workgroup look at other options for solutions.

Next Steps:

TAC will complete their comment and post it to the OPTN website during the public comment period.

Upcoming Meeting

- March, 27 2019