

OPTN Policy Notice

MELD Exception Conversion

Sponsoring Committee:
Policy/Bylaws Affected:
Public Comment:
Effective Date:

Executive Committee
None
January 31, 2019 – March 22, 2019
Pending implementation and notice to OPTN members

Problem Statement

Current OPTN policy provides that if a candidate's transplant program believes that a candidate's model for end-stage liver disease (MELD) or pediatric model for end stage liver disease (PELD) score does not appropriately reflect the candidate's medical urgency, the transplant physician may apply to the Regional Review Board (RRB) for a MELD or PELD score exception. As the result of proposals adopted by the OPTN Board of Directors in June 2017 (*National Liver Review Board*) and December of 2018 (*Liver and Intestine Distribution Using Distance from Donor Hospital*), the functions of the RRB will be replaced by the National Liver Review Board (NLRB). Candidates with exception scores that predated the implementation of NLRB could be unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged when the allocation changes adopted in December of 2018 (hereafter "Acuity Circles") are implemented; scores awarded from the RRBs are subject to variance in practice and scoring methods. In order to prevent candidates from reapplication and possibly losing time accrued at that score, the OPTN solicited public comment on if and how to convert current scores into scores that match the system under the NLRB.

Summary of Changes¹

On March 26, 2019, the Executive Committee approved a new implementation plan for the NLRB and Acuity Circles on behalf of the OPTN Board of Directors. The changes to the implementation plan were requested by the Liver and Intestinal Organ Transplantation Committee in response to concerns raised during public comment. Both NLRB and allocation changes will be implemented on April 30, 2019. On that date, existing exception scores will be converted.

What Members Need to Do

Transplant Hospitals:

In order to ensure efficient review of exception forms as RRBs are replaced by the NLRB, liver transplant programs are asked to avoid submitting new exception applications or extensions during the week of April 23-30, 2019. This will allow the RRB to review as many of the exceptions submitted prior to the NLRB as possible, and will minimize the number of exception forms submitted in the RRB system that must be reviewed by the NLRB.

¹ For a more detailed explanation of the changes, see "NLRB Conversion Mini-Brief," available on the OPTN website.

Conversion Plan

RESOLVED, candidates will be categorized into three age categories:

1. **Adult candidates:** Candidates ages 18 or older at the time of registration.
2. **Adolescent candidates:** Candidates who will be 12 years or older at the time of implementation of Acuity Circles and were registered prior to the age of 18.
3. **Pediatric PELD candidates:** Candidates who will be under the age of 12 years old at the time of implementation of Acuity Circles.

FURTHER RESOLVED, candidates with current approved or pending MELD or PELD exception scores and extensions for diagnoses of Primary Hyperoxaluria at the time of implementation of Acuity Circles will have their scores converted as follows:

Table C-1: Conversion of MELD or PELD Exceptions and Extensions for candidates with a diagnosis of Primary Hyperoxaluria upon implementation of Acuity Circles

If candidate is	And their current exception score is	Then the candidate's exception score will be equal to:
Adult, Adolescent, or Pediatric PELD	40 and above	Their existing score; no conversion
Adult	22-39	Median MELD at transplant (MMaT)
Adolescent	22-39	MMaT+3
Adult and Adolescent	21 and below	Their existing score; no conversion
Pediatric PELD	39 and below	Median PELD at transplant (MPaT)+3

FURTHER RESOLVED, candidates with current approved or pending MELD or PELD exception scores and extensions for diagnoses other than Primary Hyperoxaluria at the time of implementation of Acuity Circles will have their scores converted as follows:

Table C-2: Conversion of MELD or PELD Exceptions and Extensions for candidates with diagnoses other than Primary Hyperoxaluria upon implementation of Acuity Circles

If candidate is	And their current exception score is	Then the candidate's exception score will be equal to:
Adult, Adolescent, or Pediatric PELD	40 and above	Their existing score; no conversion
Adult	22-39	MMaT-3
Adolescent	22-39	MMaT
Adult and Adolescent	21 and below	Their existing score; no conversion
Pediatric PELD	39 and below	MPaT