

**OPTN Organ Procurement Organization (OPO) Committee
Donation after Circulatory Death (DCD) Policy Review Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
September 27, 2019
Teleconference**

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Introduction

The Donation after Circulatory Death (DCD) Policy Review Subcommittee met via teleconference on September 27, 2019 to discuss the following agenda items:

- 1. Policy Language**
- 2. DCD Information**
- 3. Next Steps**

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

1. Policy Language

Subcommittee members reviewed and discussed proposed DCD Policy language.

Summary of discussion:

There are two issues that should be addressed:

1. Timing when OPOs can initiate donation discussions
2. When can information be provided to the healthcare team and/or donor family

Members reviewed the policy language options and the purpose of the project with members. From the previous work done on the policy language, two policy language options were identified:

- Option #1: "Prior to discussing donation opportunities with the legal authorizing individual, the host OPO must confirm with the healthcare team that end of life discussions and decisions are being held with the legal authorizing individual."
- Option #2: "Prior to initiating any discussion with the legal authorizing person about organ donation for a potential DCD donor, the OPO must confirm that the authorizing person intends to withdraw life sustaining medical treatment."

Option #1 provides flexibility to OPOs and transplant programs while Option #2 basically restates what is currently in OPTN policy. The concern with Option #1 was that there might be controversy within the community if the safeguards are removed or reduced.

The Subcommittee Chair encouraged the Subcommittee to find balance on language that allows organizations to feel comfortable to have donation conversations sooner, but not so early that it causes controversy and the misconception that it would be pushing organ donation in an effort to make a decision to ending treatment.

Members were asked for their feedback. The goal of this discussion is to determine which option conceptually addresses the concerns the subcommittee would like to address.

Overall, the Subcommittee members agreed on Option #1. One member stated that Option #2 would address the concerns the subcommittee wants to articulate and that the concept in Option #1 could result in pushback from the community.

Another member stated that Option #2 seemed more confining. The process should be family-driven and families should have information available to make them aware of their options.

A member added that when families make the decision to withdraw treatment, it is usually done right away. It is the belief that end of life discussions are happening, but the option of organ donation is not being discussed in an early enough timeframe.

The Subcommittee Chair summarized that the subcommittee was in favor of Option #1 for the policy language concept. The subcommittee agreed that families should be provided with information about donation as part of end of life discussions. A member stated that the first option seemed to be the best, but that there should be caution in wording the policy based on previous opposition in the policy language from other organizations.

Next Steps:

- Continue drafting policy language to review and discuss further.

2. DCD Information

The Subcommittee reviewed additional resources regarding DCD and provided clarification on those topics.

Summary of discussion:

The Subcommittee reviewed and discussed additional information pertaining to DCD such as:

- Definitions: there is an OPTN definition for DCD. Although similarly defined, there are variations of this definition from other resources.
- Explaining the DCD process: Providing information about what DCD is and how the process works. The University of Wisconsin has developed an informative one-page document that contains definitions and explains the DCD process.
- Effective practices: From the Subcommittee's last discussion, there was some discussion about creating a guidance document. There is some concern about this approach because the subcommittee is not trying to dictate how organizations handle DCD donation.
- Collaborative Innovation and Improvement Network (COIIN): The COIIN team has started work on a DCD project. The project involves collaboration with members to determine how OPOs, donor hospitals, and transplant hospitals can work together to improve and increase the use of DCD donors. The Subcommittee agreed that the COIIN team could join a future conference to provide more detail to the project.

The Subcommittee Chair agreed that the subcommittee could develop a question and answers document to help clarify the proposed changes and the rationale behind the changes. UNOS staff explained that the Ethics Committee would be consulted on this project as it moves forward.

3. Next Steps

- Provide an update to the full OPO Committee and submit the project to the Policy Oversight Committee for review.

Upcoming Meeting

- November 1, 2019 (Teleconference)