

## **OPTN Ethics Committee**

### **Meeting Summary**

**June 18, 2020**

**Teleconference**

**Elisa Gordon, PhD, MPH, Chair**

**Keren Ladin, PhD, Vice Chair**

### **Introduction**

The OPTN Ethics Committee (the Committee) met via Citrix GoToTraining teleconference on June 18, 2020 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Thank You to Outgoing Members
2. Project Updates
3. Board of Directors Meeting Update
4. August 2020 Public Comment Proposals
5. Project Brainstorming

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

#### **1. Thank You to Outgoing Members**

##### Summary of Discussion:

UNOS staff thanked the outgoing committee members for all their contributions to the committee. UNOS staff and committee members also expressed gratitude to the outgoing committee chair.

#### **2. Project Updates**

##### Summary of Discussion:

UNOS staff provided a brief update on the following projects:

- ***Considerations in Assessment for Transplant Candidacy (CAT) Rewrite***

The subcommittee continues to work on the outline for revisions and additions to this white paper. UNOS staff noted that current and new members would be encouraged to join the subcommittee.

- ***Facilitating Patient Navigation Project Update***

The subcommittee continues to work on this project. Additional updates will be provided at future meetings.

#### **3. Board of Directors Meeting Update**

UNOS staff provided an update on the OPTN Board of Directors meeting held on June 8, 2020.

##### Summary of discussion:

UNOS staff summarized the results of the following proposals that the Ethics Committee provided feedback on:

- ***Data Collection to Assess Socioeconomic Status and Access to Transplant (Minority Affairs Committee (MAC))***: This was a proposal to collect household income and size in order to better

analyze how socioeconomic status impacts access to transplant. UNOS staff noted that there were mixed reviews during public comment so the MAC decided to request feedback from the Board of Directors. The information provided by the Board will help inform modifications to the proposal prior to a future public comment cycle. A member inquired about providing additional information to the MAC. UNOS staff noted that suggestions can be provided by email or there is the possibility of adding an Ethics Committee rep to the workgroup.

- *Addressing Medically Urgent Candidates in New Kidney Allocation Policy (Kidney Transplantation Committee)*: UNOS staff noted that this proposal was approved with an amendment to clarify that medically urgent candidates include pediatric candidates as well.
- *VCA Transplant Outcomes Data (Vascular Composite Allograft Committee)*: This proposal included data collection on children born to uterine transplant recipients as well as changes to the transplant recipient registration (TRR) and transplant recipient follow up (TRF) forms. The Board approved the changes to the TRR and TRF; however, the changes to the data collection on children born to uterine transplant recipients will require additional work by the VCA Committee. A member noted that children born to uterine candidates typically require longer periods of data collection. He noted there is a financial and emotional component to this because these children are normal and healthy individuals. Another member noted that living donors participate in 2 year follow-up and the need to potentially extend this to gain a better understanding on the long-term impact on living donors.

#### **4. August 2020 Public Comment Proposals**

##### Summary of discussion:

The Committee reviewed the list of public comment proposals that will be distributed for public comment from August to October 2020. The Committee identified the following proposals for review by the committee during the upcoming public comment period:

- *Modify Policy 14 to include Living VCA Donors (Living Donor Committee)* – A member noted that this mostly applies to living uterine transplants although there is the potential for other types of living donor transplants in the future. A member noted that his transplant center utilizes the same process for VCAs as they do for living liver and kidney donors and the process works well. A member noted that the VCA Committee workgroup did not rule out future living donors for penis (during gender reassignment surgery) and long bones. A member commented about the determination of what organs qualify as VCAs and the ethical issues concerning life enhancing versus lifesaving. The Vice-Chair noted that this issue could be a future project to provide ethical clarity on this issue.
- *Modify VCA data collection on living VCA donors (VCA Committee)* – No comments or discussion.
- *Continuous distribution of lungs* – This is a progress update and not a policy change. No comments or discussion.
- *Resource for transplant hospitals on transplant candidate use of social media to find a living donor* – No comments or discussion.

UNOS staff explained the timeline and process for the review of these proposals.

#### **5. Project Brainstorming**

##### Summary of Discussion:

UNOS staff provided an overview of the strategic goal alignment and Policy Oversight Committee (POC) strategic policy priorities. UNOS staff provided the list of project ideas identified during the previous brainstorming sessions. There were no comments or discussion on the list.

The Committee discussed a potential project related to COVID-19. The members identified the following issues:

- Is it ethically/medically appropriate to immunosuppress someone during an outbreak?
- Living donors and recipients – where are they treated within the hospital (isolated from COVID patients)?
- Classification of living donor procedures as “elective” during an outbreak, particularly if a candidate is in urgent need of a transplant.
- Preparations for a second wave (or another pandemic).
- Documentation of caregiver for potential recipients – what if the caregiver is sick or exposed to the virus?

#### Next Steps

The Committee will continue to identify potential projects.

#### **Upcoming Meetings**

- July 16, 2020 (Teleconference)
- August 20, 2020 (Teleconference)