

OPTN Ethics Committee

Meeting Summary

July 16, 2020

Conference Call

Keren Ladin, PhD, Chair

Andrew Flescher, PhD, Vice Chair

Introduction

The Committee met via Citrix GoTo teleconference on 07/16/2020 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Introduction to New Members
2. Committee Orientation
3. UNOS Collaboration
4. Multi-Organ Transplant Workgroup Update

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

1. Introduction to New Members

UNOS staff introduced the new members rolling on to the Committee.

Data summary:

Four new members rolled onto the Committee on July 1st, 2020.

Summary of discussion:

The Committee leadership welcomed the new members. There was no additional discussion.

2. Committee Orientation

UNOS staff presented an orientation to the committee and provided a brief over view of the OPTN governance system and the Committee work and resources.

Summary of discussion:

One member asked about the process for assigning members to workgroups. UNOS staff explained that members are encouraged to volunteer and reach out with their interests to Committee leadership or the point of contact. One member asked about the process for the Committee to collaborate with other committees or in workgroups. UNOS staff explained that often other committees will reach out when they begin working on a project. Additionally, the Vice Chair may hear about a project during a Policy Oversight Committee (POC) meeting and the Committee may initiate contact about collaborating on a project.

The Ex Officio Chair introduced herself and current role on the committee.

Next steps:

All new members will complete their assigned trainings.

3. UNOS Collaboration

The Committee Chair explained a new type of initiative option for committee members to participate in outside of official OPTN business.

Data summary:

The Ethics leadership introduced a new avenue with UNOS for committee members to work on topics and projects outside of the scope of the OPTN. There are not full details on this idea yet but the product could be a quarterly article analyzing contrasting perspectives on a current topic facing the community. The first proposed topic is considering ethical issues in the transplant community related to the ongoing pandemic of COVID-19.

Summary of discussion:

One member expressed support for this idea, noting that there were many ethical questions that arose during the pandemic and this could be a venue to explore them. The member asked if the efforts would be undertaken by individual committee members or a group. The Chair responded that it would be a workgroup working together to create something. A member commented that the efforts sounded similar to an ethics consult committee. The Chair noted that while this workgroup would be more reactive to discussing common issues or concerns in the community, that it would not address the problems of individual members, programs or hospitals. The Chair recommended that any interested members reach out in order to join.

Next steps:

The committee members will work on creating the workgroup and its efforts outside of OPTN meetings.

4. Multi-Organ Transplant Workgroup Update

A member of UNOS staff presented a brief overview of the background and current work of the multi-organ transplant (MOT) workgroup.

Data summary:

- The workgroup was formed as a result of a POC strategic policy priority and workgroup recommendation.
- The goal of the workgroup is to evaluate and clarify policy 5.10.C. Thereby, provide organ procurement organizations with better guidance on allocation, establish clear “sharing thresholds” within the 500 NM, and provide more consistency and transparency.
- The Workgroup is starting their work by addressing heart-liver and lung-liver transplants.

Summary of discussion:

The Chair asked for clarification on the workgroup’s primary objective. The presenter explained that the goal of the workgroup is to provide clarity to members of policy 5.10.C and ultimately some standard for how to prioritize allocating these uncommon organ transplant combinations. One member asked about the workgroup’s stance on sharing kidneys in MOT. The presenter explained that the workgroup had not yet considered kidney transplants and was currently focusing on heart-liver and lung-liver.

Next steps:

The Ethics Committee will continue to collaborate with and have member representation on the workgroup.

Upcoming Meetings

- Aug. 4th – Facilitating Patient Navigation
- Aug 19th – CAT Rewrite Subcommittee
- Aug 20th – Full Committee Meeting