

OPTN Transplant Administrators Committee

Meeting Summary

November 18, 2020

Conference Call

Nancy Metzler, Chair

Susan Zylicz, MHA, BSN, RN, CCTC, Vice Chair

Introduction

The Committee met via Citrix GoToMeeting teleconference 11/18/2020 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Online Application Demo
2. Fiscal Impact Work Group Update
3. Regional Review Update
4. POC Work Group Update
5. Other Business

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

1. Online Application Demo

UNOS staff provided a demonstration of the new online member application, answered questions, and requested feedback.

Summary of discussion:

The Chair asked if there is a checklist of documents that are required to be uploaded as part of the application in order to allow the user to prepare all needed documentation before completing the application. She raised a concern that her staff was having an issue saving the incomplete forms without the required uploads, in order to retrieve the documents and return to the application at a later time.

UNOS staff shared that the application is accessed through the Secure Enterprise portal. This may require that transplant program staff request new permissions. The Member Community section has some helpful member information and is where the applications can be accessed. There is also a contact support area where you can ask questions or request help. You may also submit key personnel notifications through contact support in addition to the online application form.

The main page has a list of applications that are in progress. The pediatric programs components is still being developed but will be available soon. Each application has a landing page with instructions for the application as well as a list of required documentation. The Chair commented that this would work as a checklist for the required documentation.

UNOS staff shared that you are able to save forms that are in progress, however, members experienced issues when trying to save incomplete applications. They also shared that logs may be either entered or uploaded, it is not required to do both. Language will be added to the application to make this easier to understand.

Members commented that a point of frustration is that if you save the application as a PDF, all sections, even those that are not applicable, are included in the PDF which makes it harder to review before submission. UNOS staff will look into this to see what the options are to make this easier.

A member asked if information about surgeons can be transferred from program to program since it is now stored digitally. Currently this information stays with the member application. If a surgeon moves, the log could be reused if the surgeon brings it with them but the other data will stay with the member application.

Next steps:

Members were invited to submit additional feedback.

2. Fiscal Impact Work Group Update

A Fiscal Impact Advisory Group (FIG) member provided an update on the Spring 2021 public comment proposals evaluated by the workgroup.

Summary of discussion:

The FIG member shared the FIG roster, noting that there is a position open for Transplant Administrator Committee (TAC) member to join.

The following proposals were reviewed in order to evaluate the anticipated fiscal impact.

Clarify Multi Organ Allocation Policy, sponsored by the Organ Procurement Organization (OPO) Committee

FIG determined there was no or minimal fiscal impact to labs or hospitals. For OPOs, this proposal will increase efficiency and consistency due to better matching. There may be a need for additional data entry but the burden will be minimal overall to adjust the workflow.

Review Deceased Donor Registration Form, sponsored by the OPO Committee

It was determined that this proposal will have no or minimal fiscal impact to labs or hospitals. For OPOs, this proposal will create more succinct and streamlined forms which may result in reduced staff time. Updates to workflows and staff education will be needed, but overall the change will increase efficiency.

Required Reporting on human lymphocyte antigen (HLA) Typing Changes, sponsored by the Histocompatibility Committee

It was determined that this proposal will have no or minimal fiscal impact to hospitals. For OPOs, a typing change event, although rare, could result in significant staff time and effort to notify multiple transplant programs and OPOs. This may also require additional staff time to close a match run and reallocate when appropriate.

For labs, additional testing may be needed under the rare occurrence that a match rerun is required. However, this will increase patient safety and reduced risk of major discrepancy events. Time required for implementation is minimal.

Membership Requirements Revisions, sponsored by the Membership and Professional Standards Committee (MPSC)

This proposal has no fiscal impact to labs. For transplant programs, there is no or minimal impact. There will be a need to update internal policies to be consistent with membership requirements and internal forms, and train staff. OPOs will no longer need to submit items required by CMS Conditions of

Participation which may result in reduced staff time. OPOs will also need to update internal policies to be consistent with membership requirements and internal forms, and train staff.

Updating Median MELD at Transplant Calculation and Sorting Within Liver Allocation Classification, sponsored by the Liver and Intestines Committee

This proposal is the combination of two projects. There is no anticipated fiscal impact to OPOs or labs. Transplant hospitals will experience minimal or no impact. There is potential that the change in allocation calculation could impact transplant volumes, which if significant, could result in expenses associated with extended length of stay and listing maintenance. This proposal will take less than one month to implement.

FIG's next steps include adding impact summaries to the proposals going out for public comment in January. Additional feedback will be collected during public comment and incorporated into the proposals. Final proposals will be reviewed by the OPTN Board of Directors (BOD) in June 2021.

The purpose of the FIG is to gather fiscal impact information that allows the OPTN Board of Directors to consider high level, direct financial implications on its members as part of their decision-making process. This fiscal impact information will now be included as part of the public comment proposals to allow administrators to plan for potential budget impacts and to allow for members to respond before consideration by the BOD. To achieve this, FIG is engaging with Committees earlier in their proposal development process.

UNOS staff invited when members to provide feedback about the fiscal impact of Committee proposals. These comments can be included in the proposal going to the BOD.

3. Regional Review Update

UNOS staff and project manager for the OPTN regional review project provided a report on the community input received during the summer 2020 public comment period.

Summary of discussion:

The goal of this project is to optimize the effectiveness of the OPTN by reevaluating its current structure. This is being approached by launching an objective review by a 3rd party vendor with no predetermined outcome that allows for multiple touchpoints to collect community input. When the proposed changes, if any are determined, they will go through the public comment process prior to the Board of Directors consideration for approval.

Currently, there are 11 OPTN Regions. Since 1986, the OPTN has used administrative boundaries, or "regions," to organize OPTN governance and operations. The regions were broadly shaped by historical patterns of patient referral and non-local organ sharing.

The first request for community feedback occurred during the summer 2020 public comment period. There were 112 participants. These initial results will be shared with the selected vendor that will organize and conduct the study. There will be additional opportunities for the community to provide input. The vendor will be selected later this fall.

Most of those that provided input were OPO executive/management, followed by transplant administrators, transplant surgeons, and recipients/ recipient families.

When asked to describe the current OPTN regional structure, the most popular responses were "effective," followed by "ineffective," "outdated," and "based on geographic boundaries." One participant called the OPTN regional structure an "administrative necessity for representation."

When asked what are the advantages of the current OPTN regional structure, participants responded that an advantage is building relationships. Members responded that familiarity with nearby transplant programs and OPOs helps to build trust and that ultimately these connections improve donation and transplantation.

When asked about disadvantages of the current OPTN regional structure, the most popular response was “impacts to broader sharing,” followed by “regional differences,” and regional population/size variation.”

When asked about barriers and challenges that should be considered during the course of this project, participants responded with “regional relationships,” “travel and costs,” and “national variation.” Many responses emphasized the value of relationships.

When asked what an ideal structure would look like, participants believed that it should be restructured to better balance representation. They also responded that the restructure should preserve and build relationships and that it should have fewer regions to promote broader sharing.

A detailed report can be found on the OPTN website under “Members” and “Regions.”

UNOS staff requested feedback from the members.

The Chair commented that they would like an update in the future. They also commented that including the same number of OPOs and transplant programs in each region was an interesting comment received in the request for community input. The Chair commented that thinking about competition for spots on committees, you have less of a chance to represent in regions with more programs. UNOS staff will look for and share a map that shows the volumes of transplant programs and OPOs.

This project will go through the public comment cycles and go to the board in Dec 2021.

A member was surprised that there was a lot of feedback about keeping the regions the same especially with broader sharing and the removal of donor service areas. Another member commented that they were not surprised that relationships were a common theme.

UNOS staff asked for members to send any ideas. All comments received will help guide the vendor in their review. Updates on this project will be provided at the regional meetings.

The Chair commented that broader sharing is requiring transplant programs to expand their relationships to new OPOs.

UNOS staff shared that the review of this structure was required by latest HRSA contract.

4. POC Work Group Update

The Vice Chair gave an update about the Policy Oversight Committee (POC) workgroups.

Summary of discussion:

New POC workgroups are being formed to address the strategic priority of efficient matching.

The Match Run Workgroup is sponsored by Operations & Safety Committee and will be comprised of members from various Committees including two members from TAC. Two TAC volunteers are needed.

The Donation Process Workgroup and Biopsy Best Practices Workgroup are also being formed to address efficient matching projects which are not seeking TAC members but may want input or representation from TAC in the future.

All workgroups will have their first meetings by the end of the year.

One member volunteered to join the Match Run Workgroup. UNOS staff will follow up with an email to find the second volunteer and to invite those not on the call.

5. Other Business

Summary of discussion:

UNOS staff requested headshots from the members. These will be used for a roster so members are able to put a name to a face while we are only meeting virtually.

Next steps:

Upcoming Meetings

January 27, 2021

Attendance

- **Committee Members**
 - Andrea Tietjen
 - Deb Maurer
 - Denise Neal
 - Erica Seator
 - Joshua Gossett
 - Kelly Laschkewitsch
 - Melissa Porter
 - Michelle James
 - Nancy Metzler
 - Scott Wansley
 - Susan Zylicz
 - Travis Watson
- **UNOS Staff**
 - Angel Carroll
 - Emily Ward
 - MiYoung Kwon
 - Peter Sokol
 - Roger Vacovsky
 - Sarah Konigsburg