

OPTN Liver and Intestinal Organ Transplantation Committee

Meeting Summary

November 20, 2020

Conference Call

James Trotter, MD, Chair

James Pomposelli, MD, PhD, Vice Chair

Introduction

The OPTN Liver and Intestinal Organ Transplantation Committee (the Committee) met via Citrix GoToMeeting teleconference on 11/20/2020 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Updating NLRB Guidance and Policy Clarification: Transition Procedures and Vote
2. Median MELD at Transplant (MMaT) around the Donor Hospital and Sorting within Liver Allocation: Transition Procedures and Vote
3. New Project Discussion
4. Committee Vice Chair Selection Process

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

1. Updating NLRB Guidance and Policy Clarification: Transition Procedures and Vote

Summary of discussion:

The Committee agreed with the recommendation of no transition measures.

A member asked the purpose of specific language added to the *Pediatric MELD/PELD Exception Review* section of this guidance. Another member clarified that this addition was made to give programs and reviewers guidance on the management of circumstances in which a condition is not described anywhere in the guidance.

The Committee reviewed the policy language and guidance.

Vote: Does the Committee Support sending the *Updating NLRB Guidance and Policy Clarification* proposal for public comment beginning in January 2021?

The Committee voted unanimously to send the proposal out for public comment.

Next steps:

The Policy Oversight Committee (POC) will review and provide a recommendation to the Executive Committee on whether the proposal should be released for public comment in January 2021.

2. Median MELD at Transplant (MMaT) around the Donor Hospital and Sorting within Liver Allocation: Transition Procedures and Vote

Summary of discussion:

A member noted a concern from the pediatric community about adult lab candidates appearing higher on the match than pediatric exception candidates when both candidates have the same Model for End-Stage Liver Disease (MELD)/ Pediatric End-Stage Liver Disease (PELD) scores and blood type compatibility and that this could disadvantage pediatric patients. A member responded that they had spoken with a

member of the OPTN Pediatric Transplantation Committee and asked them to submit this concern for further consideration during the public comment period starting in January 2021.

The Committee discussed special provisions for Hawaii and Puerto Rico. A member asked why the 250 Nautical Mile (NM) circle would be necessary when there are not any other transplant programs within 500NM. UNOS staff explained that the 250NM circle ensures that all donor hospitals in Hawaii can capture the one transplant program on the island.

The Committee agreed with the following transition recommendations:

- Use an updated MMaT cohort upon implementation
- Allow candidates with a calculated MELD or PELD who had a higher exception score prior to implementation to keep that time as part of their time at score or higher

The Committee reviewed the policy language.

Vote: Does the Committee Support sending the Median MELD at Transplant around the Donor Hospital and Sorting within Liver Allocation proposal for public comment beginning in January 2021?

The Committee voted unanimously to send the proposal out for public comment.

Next steps:

The POC will review and provide a recommendation to the Executive Committee on whether the proposal should be released for public comment in January 2021.

3. New Project Discussion

Summary of discussion:

The Committee continued to discuss a potential project to update the MELD score to better account for differences in gender. Historically, data shows that female waitlisted liver transplant candidates have lower transplant rates and consequently higher incidence of mortality. Members reached consensus to move forward with the project to update the MELD score as presented.

Next steps:

The Committee will continue development of this project during upcoming meetings. They aim to present the project to the POC for approval as soon as feasible.

4. Committee Vice Chair Selection Process

UNOS staff presented the new standardized process for selecting and nominating OPTN Committee Vice Chairs.

Summary of discussion:

There was no discussion.

Next steps:

Committee members will be sent a survey to rank the top four candidates. The Committee will have one week to complete the survey before Committee leadership will begin interviewing the candidates and recommend a primary and secondary candidate to the OPTN Vice President. The OPTN Vice President will make the final appointment in January 2021.

Upcoming Meetings

- December 4, 2020
- January 7, 2021

Attendance

- **Committee Members**
 - Pete Abt
 - Sumeet Asrani
 - Kim Brown
 - Alan Gunderson
 - Bailey Heiting
 - Ray Lynch
 - James Markmann
 - Pete Matthews
 - Greg McKenna
 - Mark Orloff
 - James Pomposelli
 - Jorge Reyes
 - James Trotter
- **HRSA Representatives**
 - Jim Bowman
 - Marilyn Levi
 - Robert Walsh
- **UNOS Staff**
 - Matt Cafarella
 - Julia Chipko
 - Craig Connors
 - Betsy Gans
 - Victor Melendez
 - Rebecca Murdock
 - Joel Newman
 - Samantha Noreen
 - Kelley Poff
 - Matt Prentice
 - Leah Slife
 - Karen Williams
- **Other Attendees**
 - Jim Sharrock (visiting board member)
 - Samantha Taylor
 - Samantha Delair