

OPTN Transplant Coordinators Committee

Meeting Summary

July 21, 2021

Conference Call

Stacy McKean, RN, Chair

Natalie Santiago-Blackwell, RN, MSN, Vice Chair

Introduction

The Transplant Coordinators Committee met via Citrix GoToMeeting teleconference on 07/21/2021 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Welcome & New Committee Member Introductions
2. Updated Refusal Codes: User Acceptance Testing
3. New Committee Member Orientation
4. Kidney and Pancreas Allocation Changes 3 Month Data Report

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

1. Welcome & New Committee Member Introductions

The Chair welcomed and introduced the four new members to the first Committee meeting of their three-year term.

2. Updated Refusal Codes: User Acceptance Testing

UNOS staff provided a background and update of the Refusal Codes project. The OPTN Board of Directors approved the proposed changes in June and implementation is underway with a target for November 2021. UNOS staff is requesting volunteers who are willing to give 1-2 hours of their time in mid-October to provide feedback on clarity of the new Refusal Codes implementation prior to production release.

Data summary:

Increase in refusal reason options from 29 to 43 new codes, grouped into 8 categories. All 800 series refusal codes will go away and a new 700 series will take their place.

Summary of discussion:

The Chair inquired if transplant professionals, not within the Committee, would be able to participate in this training exercise? UNOS staff responded yes and encouraged Members to share this volunteer opportunity with their network or colleagues who may be interested.

A member asked if they could take screenshots of the of the testing experience to share with colleagues to assist with learning the new refusal codes? UNOS staff encouraged participants to take screenshots and share with other to assist with the training and education process.

Next steps:

Please reach out to either the Committee support staff or presenter, Lloyd.Board@unos.org, if they have any questions or know of colleagues interested in participating. UNOS staff will circulate information about the testing closer to the intended timeframe.

3. New Committee Member Orientation

UNOS staff provided an overview of the OPTN, the role and influence of the Committee, the policy development process, and resources available to the Committee. The Chair emphasized the expectations of members.

UNOS staff reminded the Committee that all new and returning members must complete continuing education modules in UNOS Connect, sign the conflict of interest document, and sign the confidentiality agreement. Please reach out to UNOS staff with any questions.

The OPTN is currently seeking volunteers for the Fiscal Impact Group (FIG). This group meets twice a year to evaluate fiscal impact of public comment proposals on members ahead of the OPTN Board of Directors Meeting. Please contact Kristina.Hogan@unos.org with any questions or interest in participating.

4. Kidney and Pancreas Allocation Changes 3 Month Data Report

Martha Pavlakis, MD, the Chair of the OPTN Kidney Transplantation Committee, presented the 3-month data report following the removal of Donation Service Areas (DSA) and Region from Kidney Allocation policy, which was implemented on March 15, 2021.

Data summary:

Transplant volumes increased, especially in pediatric candidates, Black and Hispanic candidates, candidates who have been on dialysis longer, and CPRA 80-97%. Overall discard rate did not increase. More kidneys are distributed outside the donor hospital DSA, but most stay within 250 NM. These results align with the Kidney-Pancreas Simulated Allocation Model (KPSAM) used to inform policy development.¹

Summary of discussion:

The Chair praised the presenter for her time, shared the experience of her Organ Procurement Organization (OPO), and asked if the discard data had been broken down by region. At this time, the presenter does not have this information on hand but will check with UNOS staff in obtaining and circulating this information.

The Chair asked if there was data on the number of allocations occurring from the Released Organ Match Run. UNOS staff responded that the Released Organ Match Run was not being used as frequently as the Import Organ Match Run prior to policy implementation. The presenter noted that there was a decrease in discards from the Import Organ Match Run pre policy implementation to the Released Organ Match Run post policy implementation.

A member asked if the change in acceptance rates for local and nonlocal was delineated by the Kidney Donor Profile Index (KDPI)? The member noted that their center was accepting more marginal, non-local organ offers because there has been a reduction in local offers. UNOS staff responded that this breakdown has not occurred in the 3-month data report, but they will plan to address this as more data has been gathered.

A member inquired if data has been collected on the volume of offers that transplant centers are getting? Operationally, this member's center has been triaging and fielding way more organ offers than before but these offers are not necessarily translating into transplants. Due to their sequencing

¹ Amanda Robinson, Alice Toll, and Katrina Gauntt, *Eliminate Use of DSA and Region from Kidney Allocation 3 Month Post-Implementation Monitoring Report* (Richmond, VA: United Network of Organ Sharing, 2021).

placement on the initial offer the transplant center staff are unable to use the 'provisional yes' in the manner that is intended for effective communication between OPOs and transplant centers. Other members echoed this sentiment and noted that the change in offer patterns has been challenging to expect when an import offer may actually lead to a transplant. There was also concern that these import offers have a higher ischemic time by the time transplant centers have moved up from #300 to #2 on the match run. The presenter empathized with the experience of the Committee members but does not have data on the number of organ offers or if this specific data is being collected on the national level.

A member noted that their center utilizes the offer filters to identify which type of kidneys they would be willing to accept, especially for pediatric patients. They have capped the KDPI and cold time they would accept but have experienced unprecedented issues in obtaining couriers. This increased impact in workflow on courier services and longer delivery times may be causing transplant centers to refuse organs. The presenter responded that hopefully they can address these concerns down the road by looking into data on offer volume.

A member asked if any attention was being paid to coordinator burnout? The presenter empathized with the challenges that coordinators are facing and noted the ease in under collecting data on the stress that can result from policy changes. Unfortunately, there are not any surveys or data collected on this that the presenter is aware of.

A member suggested including this as a question on the UNOS Staffing Survey, especially as their center looks to increase the amount of after hour staff to field the influx of offers. Multiple members agreed with this sentiment, one inquiring if the discard rate would be connected to an inability to address offers in time. Many members felt that this change has been the largest impact operationally and would be interested in seeing how the influx of offers is impacting OPOs and transplant centers more specifically.

As members discussed the hope for a 'leveling off' the presenter reminded the Committee that not every region is experiencing the increases that are being shared here, some have seen decreasing numbers. A member added that their center is seeing an increase in offers but not an increase in transplants and has been faced with explaining why an increase in staff is needed when there has not been an increase in transplants.

A member asked if the Kidney Committee was looking at a sliding scale for points for CPRA and doing a recalibration of those points? The presenter shared that a project was started but has been paused to coordinate the recalibration into the new continuous distribution framework. The OPTN Histocompatibility Committee will be working with the Kidney Committee to address this.

The Chair asked if this would be presented at the Regional Meetings for broader input and discussion. UNOS staff replied that they are still working through how this can be incorporated into the Regional Meetings especially with the quantity of public comment items, two of which are sponsored by the Kidney Committee on the discussion agenda. The full report has been circulated to the community.

Next Steps:

The presenter and UNOS staff will share this feedback with the remainder of the Kidney Committee. This feedback will be incorporated into future monitoring reports.

Upcoming Meetings

- August 18, 2021
- September 15, 2021
- October 20, 2021
- November 17, 2021
- December 15, 2021
- January 19, 2022
- February 16, 2022
- March 15, 2022
- April 20, 2022
- May 18, 2022
- June 15, 2022

Attendance

- **Committee Members**
 - Alexandria Dillard
 - Angele Lacks
 - Brenda Durand
 - Jaime Myers
 - JoAnn Morey
 - Kelsey McCauley
 - Lisa Gallagher
 - Maria Casarella
 - Rachel White
 - Rosa Guajardo
 - Sergio Manzano
 - Sharon Klarman
 - Stacy McKean
 - Stacy Sexton
- **UNOS Staff**
 - Amanda Robinson
 - Elizabeth Miller
 - Laura Schmitt
 - Lindsay Larkin
 - Lloyd Board
 - Ross Walton
 - Susan Tlusty
- **Other Attendees**
 - Martha Pavlakis