

**OPTN Policy Oversight Committee  
Meeting Summary  
November 9, 2023  
Conference Call**

**Jennifer Prinz, BSN, MPH, Chair  
Erika Lease, MD, Vice Chair**

## **Introduction**

The OPTN Policy Oversight Committee met via Cisco WebEx teleconference on 11/09/2023 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Pre-Public Comment Preview
2. Expeditious Task Force Meeting Debrief
3. Uncompleted Projects: Data Review

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

### **1. Pre-Public Comment Preview**

The Committee reviewed twelve items that will be going out for public comment January 2024, the items are: *Patient Safety Contact Notification, Continuous Distribution of Heart Update, Revise Recipient and Donor Histocompatibility Forms, Establish Exception Criteria for Liver Cancer Diagnoses, Six Minute Walk Standardization, Promote Efficiency of Lung Allocation, Remove Race and HCV from KDPI, Modify Policy 5.6.D: Effect of Acceptance, Multi-Organ Allocation of Kidneys from Donors with a KDPI of 0-34% Request for Feedback, Enhanced OPO Performance Monitoring, Clarifying Requirements for Pronouncements of Death, 2024-2027 OPTN Strategic Plan.*

Summary of discussion:

No decisions made or votes held.

*Patient Safety Contact Notification Process*

No discussion or follow-up.

*Continuous Distribution of Heart Update*

No discussion or follow-up.

*Revise Recipient and Donor Histocompatibility Forms*

No discussion or follow-up.

*Establish Exception Criteria for Liver Cancer Diagnoses*

The Vice Chair of the Liver and Intestine Committee (LIC) updated the Committee on a few changes to the proposal. The original estimate of 500 hours for IT implementation applied to the addition of an adjunct acceptable diagnostic tool for hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) but is now being applied to change the Adult HCC Review Board to an Adult Transplant Oncology Review Board. This shift in the

allocation of resources is to include different cancer diagnoses in a more fully comprehensive review board.

A member asked for clarity on who would populate the Adult Transplant Oncology Review Board and how those individuals would be chosen. The LIC Vice Chair clarified that the current method of each center choosing someone to be on the review board will remain the same, but this proposal would create a different category from which the center can choose someone to be on the oncology review board. The member added that they were unsure how many centers had experience with non-HCC malignancies, to which the LIC Vice Chair specified that in their research there were more exceptions requests than expected for non-HCC malignancies, and the LIC felt it necessary to address this issue. The LIC Vice Chair also specified that the guidelines would outline the process in detail for centers.

#### *Six Minute Walk Standardization*

No discussion or follow-up.

#### *Promote Efficiency of Lung Allocation*

No discussion or follow-up.

#### *Remove Race and Hepatitis C (HCV) from the Kidney Donor Profile Index (KDPI)*

There was broad support amongst Committee members for removing race and HCV from KDPI calculations. Members emphasized the importance of this change and noted it may be an iterative process requiring rigorous evaluation of risk factors. The potential impact on pediatric candidates was raised, with modeling data showing age may become a bigger factor in KDPI scores once race and HCV are removed. Ongoing monitoring of outcomes was highlighted as an essential component of this project.

#### *Modify Policy 5.6.D: Effect of Acceptance*

The Chair of the Multi-Organ Transplantation (MOT) Committee clarified that this proposal is for policy language modification.

#### *Multi-Organ Allocation of Kidneys from Donors with a KDPI of 0-34% Request for Feedback*

It was clarified that this item is a request for feedback only, not policy language or modifications at this time.

#### *Enhanced OPO Performance Monitoring*

No discussion or follow-up.

#### *Clarifying Requirements for Pronouncements of Death*

No discussion or follow-up.

#### *2024-2027 OPTN Strategic Plan*

No discussion or follow-up.

The Committee also heard a proposal that would be going out for a Special Public Comment about variances for expedited placement of organs. The Committee sought clarification on whether the variance proposal would come from the Expeditious Taskforce or go through the normal proposal process. Staff highlighted that the Executive Committee would be sponsoring the project, but it is undecided which committee will be in charge of creating and reviewing the variance protocols. A member asked whether this proposal would allow for multiple protocols and multiple pilot projects to occur simultaneously and whether these are intended to be sustained over a period of time or had a

specific objective in mind. It was confirmed that this would allow for multiple overlapping pilot projects with the intention to constantly evaluate and review the variances, and if they prove beneficial it could become permanent policy.

Next steps:

The Committee will hear a more in-depth review of the projects going out for public comment during their January meeting.

**2. Expeditious Task Force Meeting Debrief**

A few Committee members presented updates about their experience on the Expeditious Task Force meeting.

Summary of Discussion:

No decisions made or votes held.

Members shared the progress of the Task Force thus far, highlighting the focus of their meetings to gain understanding of concerns across the transplant community and identify opportunities for improvement. The Task Force includes representatives from all major stakeholder groups, with the goal of responding to issues around transportation, organ non-use, and other inefficiencies in the system.

A member communicated that in the kickoff meeting, members focused on getting to know each other and beginning to develop bold aims for the initiative. Different working groups have since met to start defining potential projects and bold aims. The Task Force is thinking creatively about the entire transplant process, not just incremental changes, and trying to envision an aspirational future state for the community.

Task Force members are compiling ideas for bold aims to present at the December Board of Directors meeting. The main priorities are developing initiatives that are measurable, meaningful, and will have real impact. After the December meeting, the next phase will involve figuring out how to implement the ideas and identify necessary resources and guard rails.

Next steps:

All Committee members are encouraged to share any thoughts or proposals on potential bold aims with Task Force members, as they are in a brainstorming phase seeking ideas from across committees and the community.

**3. Uncompleted Projects: Data Review**

The Committee discussed the fact that some policy projects end up stuck in an uncompleted state indefinitely without clear resolution.

Summary of discussion:

No decisions made or votes held.

Members noted that in some cases, projects go through Public Comment and extensive development, only to be tabled or put on hold later without explanation. Members agreed there needs to be a structured process for re-reviewing lingering uncompleted projects on a regular basis, rather than allowing them to languish. When a project is tabled, it should be returned to the owning Committee after a certain time period for re-evaluation on whether it should be closed out officially or restarted.

This will help provide closure instead of abandoning initiatives completely after substantial time investments.

Additionally, some members raised questions around what criteria determine if a project undergoing public comment gets subsequently placed on hold. Improving visibility into the reasoning behind these decisions would help the community understand why certain promising policy changes fail to materialize.

Next steps:

The Committee committed to developing more consistent procedures to revisit uncompleted work before considering it closed. This will help determine if items should be revived or officially ended, while also shedding more light on the factors driving policy projects into a perpetual unfinished status.

**Upcoming Meetings**

- December 14, 2023
- January 11, 2024
- February 8, 2024

## Attendance

- **Committee Members**
  - Stevan Gonzalez
  - Jennifer Prinz
  - Kim Koontz
  - JD Menteer
  - Shimul Shah
  - Stephanie Pouch
  - Lori Markham
  - Lisa Stocks
  - Oscar Serrano
  - Gerald Morris
  - Christine Brenner
  - Erika Lease
  - Nicole Turgeon
  - Jesse Schold
  - Rachel Engen
  - Matt Hartwig
  - Ty Dunn
  - Arpita Basu
  - Jason Huff
- **HRSA Representatives**
  - Vanessa Arriola
- **SRTR Staff**
  - Ajay Israni
- **UNOS Staff**
  - Lindsay Larkin
  - Cole Fox
  - Stryker-Ann Vosteen
  - Kaitlin Swanner
  - James Alcorn
  - Susan Tlusty
  - Taylor Livelli
  - Kayla Balfour
  - Tamika Watkins
  - Darby Harris
  - Robert Hunter
  - Trish Jaison
  - Meghan McDermott
  - Laura Cartwright
  - Houlder Hudgins
  - Sharon Shepherd
  - Kelley Poff
  - Kristina Hogan