

OPTN Ad Hoc International Relations Committee

Meeting Summary

January 25, 2022

Conference Call

Barry Friedman, RN, BSN, MBA, CPTC, Chair

Pramod Bonde, MD, Vice Chair

Introduction

The OPTN Ad Hoc International Relations Committee (Committee) met via Citrix GoTo Meeting teleconference on 01/25/2022 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Winter 2022 Public Comment Preview
2. Discussion: Project Ideas

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

1. Winter 2022 Public Comment Preview

The Committee was informed on Winter 2022 Public Comment as well as upcoming regional meetings.

Summary of discussion:

There were no comments or questions.

2. Discussion: Project Ideas

The Committee discussed new project ideas.

Summary of discussion:

Project Idea: Kidney Paired Donation with Canada

A member suggested that the United States may benefit more from working towards a national kidney paired donation (KPD) program rather than a cross-border KPD program. The member stated that the logistical challenges associated with a cross-border KPD program may outweigh the net impact. Another member mentioned that insurance and the costs related to transplantation may be a significant issue.

A member stated that the International Transplant Society is opposed to the global exchange of organs.

The Chair stated that there are structures that allow the ability to share deceased donor organs across borders. The Committee acknowledged that cross-border sharing with Canada would be accomplished through the OPTN KPD Pilot Program.

The Vice Chair suggested that the Committee could systematically review the challenges that impend cross-border sharing of organs, if the Committee decides it is a priority. A member suggested that understanding the potential benefit of such a program would be an important initial step.

Project Idea: Sharing of organs across geographically contiguous (and 500 nautical miles with air) territories and United States.

The Vice Chair stated the Committee could begin to explore the limitations on an idea such as this. The Vice Chair explained that discussing limitations and possible solutions may aid in figuring out an applicable approach should this be worked on in the future.

Project Idea: Improving mechanism for follow up of international patients undergoing transplants within U.S. transplant program

The Chair requested reviewing data on the number of non-U.S. citizen/non-U.S. resident (NCNR) transplants occurred during 2021.

Project Idea: Mechanism for informal exchange of ideas for international community

The Vice Chair suggested a mechanism could be established to provide the sharing of expertise and resources for international transplant communities. The Vice Chair stated that this could help transplant communities in other countries develop their deceased donor transplant programs.

A member stated that a lot of international countries do not have a similar infrastructure as the United States does. The member explained this may make it difficult to determine a point of contact. The Vice Chair suggested that contacting an embassy or consulate may be the first pathway. Another member suggested that a lot of countries may not have government involvement in their organ transplantation systems.

A member stated that this will create a structured pathway to allow other developing countries contact for help with their transplant programs. The Chair suggested the Committee may also review other international transplant programs as an opportunity to learn and improve the United States' system.

Committee members supported this idea. HRSA staff reminded the Committee that the development of any potential project idea will require it to align with NOTA, Final Rule, and other OPTN processes.

Project Idea: Focus on bringing attention to the Committee's work (newsletter, periodic email update)

A member stated that this idea may be more worthwhile after the Committee begins working on a new project in order to have substantial updates to share with the community.

Another member stated that hosting webinars may be a way to combine internationally exchanging ideas while bring attention to the Committee's work at the same time.

Next steps:

The Committee will continue discussing potential project ideas.

Upcoming Meetings

- February 22, 2022 (teleconference)

Attendance

- **Committee Members**
 - Abby Ruiz
 - Barry Friedman
 - Chang Liu
 - Howard Nathan
 - Min Zhou
 - Nancy Long
 - Peter Stock
 - Pramod Bonde
 - Samy Riad
 - Sylvia Villalon
- **HRSA Representatives**
 - Jim Bowman
 - Marilyn Levi
- **SRTR Staff**
 - Bryn Thompson
- **UNOS Staff**
 - Betsy Gans
 - Meghan McDermott
 - Robert Hunter