

## **OPTN Liver and Intestinal Organ Transplantation Committee**

### **Meeting Summary**

**October 1, 2021**

**Conference Call**

**James Pomposelli, MD, PhD, Chair**

**Scott Biggins, MD, Vice Chair**

### **Introduction**

The OPTN Liver and Intestinal Organ Transplantation Committee (the Committee) met via Citrix GoToMeeting teleconference on 10/01/2021 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Further Enhancements to the NLRB
2. Incorporating a Sex Variable into the MELD Score

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

#### **1. Further Enhancements to the NLRB**

The National Liver Review Board (NLRB) Chair provided an update on the next NLRB project.

##### Summary of discussion:

A member suggested modifying the language for hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) candidates who are treated and recur from "completely treated" to "completely treated or resected" to be more inclusive. The Committee discussed the waiting period for candidates who are completely treated or resected and recur. A member suggested that the cutoff point for recurrence without having to wait six months should be five years. Another member suggested that public comment feedback could help establish the cutoff point.

In order to incentivize the use of donation after cardiac death (DCD) donors, the NLRB subcommittee recommended adding language to ischemic cholangiopathy (IC) guidance that suggests IC candidates meeting exception criteria should receive Median MELD at Transplant (MMaT). A member expressed support for the changes to IC guidance. A member pointed out that there was little difference in the waiting list mortality rate between candidates that were re-listed after previously receiving a liver transplant from a DCD donor as compared to candidates re-listed after previously receiving a liver transplant from a non-DCD donor. The Committee agreed with the proposed changes, as IC candidates would be prioritized ahead of HCC candidates who receive MMaT-3. The Committee voted in support of sending the project to the Policy Oversight Committee (POC) for approval.

##### Next steps:

This project will move forward to the POC for approval.

#### **2. Incorporating a Sex Variable into the MELD Score**

The Committee continued to discuss how to incorporate biological sex in the updated Model for End-Stage Liver Disease (MELD) score.

### Summary of discussion:

Committee members voiced support for creating criteria for determining a candidate's sex, as they were concerned gaming could occur in order to gain extra MELD points without specific criteria. A member pointed out that the chance of this type of gaming is low. This member suggested that the determination of sex should be left to the candidate and their medical team. The Committee continued to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of establishing specific criteria for determining a candidate's sex compared to having the candidate and their medical team provide the candidate's current sex. Due to the issue's complexity, a member suggested that the Committee could develop guidance for whichever decision they make.

### Next steps:

The Committee and Improving the MELD Calculation Work Group will continue to discuss. Liver Committee leadership will meet with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to inform their recommendations.

### **Upcoming Meeting**

- October 20, 2021 – Virtual “In-Person”

## Attendance

- **Committee Members**
  - Alan Gunderson
  - Allison Kwong
  - Greg McKenna
  - James Eason
  - James Pomposelli
  - James Trotter
  - Jennifer Kerney
  - Kym Watt
  - Mark Orloff
  - Peter Abt
  - Scott Biggins
  - Shekhar Kubal
  - Sophoclis Alexopoulos
  - Kimberly Brown
- **HRSA Representatives**
  - Adriana Martinez
  - Jim Bowman
- **SRTR Staff**
  - Andrew Wey
  - John Lake
  - Katie Audette
  - Tim Weaver
- **UNOS Staff**
  - Matt Cafarella
  - Joel Newman
  - Julia Foutz
  - Kelley Poff
  - Nicole Benjamin
  - Niyati Upadhyay
- **Other Attendees**
  - Nicholas Wood