

OPTN Transplant Administrators Committee

Meeting Summary

August 25, 2021

Conference Call

Nancy Metzler, Chair

Susan Zyllicz, MHA, BSN, RN, CCTC, Vice Chair

Introduction

The OPTN Transplant Administrators Committee (TAC) met via Citrix GoToMeeting teleconference on 08/25/2021 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Public Comment Proposal: Reassess Inclusion of Race in Estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate (eGFR) Equation (Minority Affairs Committee)
2. Update on OPTN Regional Review Project (Executive Committee)
3. Future Vice Chair Identification

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

1. Reassess Inclusion of Race in Estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate (eGFR) Equation (Minority Affairs Committee)

The Minority Affairs Committee (MAC) Chair presented an overview of the request for feedback *Reassess Inclusion of Race in Estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate (eGFR) Equation* currently out for public comment. This project is co-sponsored by the Kidney Transplantation Committee.

Summary of discussion:

A candidate's eGFR is used as a surrogate to measure the rate at which kidneys remove waste products from the blood to determine the severity of a patient's kidney disease. However, there are inconsistencies in how eGFR is calculated and some formulas use race as a coefficient. Recent research suggests that use of the Black race coefficient disadvantages Black patients being treated for Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) as it may calculate a higher eGFR. This has a potential to delay referral and negatively impact a candidate's waiting time since a measured or calculated creatinine clearance or glomerular filtration rate (GFR) less than or equal to 20 mL/min is required in order for a candidate to begin accruing waiting time.

This project intends to evaluate the use of the Black race coefficient in the eGFR calculation as it relates to wait time criteria in kidney allocation by using OPTN community feedback to help determine what future policy should be developed.

A member commented that she is supportive of this proposal and her program has already taken steps to remove the race coefficient from its eGFR calculations. She commented that a report that identifies patients that have an eGFR close to 20 mL/min would be helpful in order to determine which candidates might benefit from having their eGFR recalculated without the use of the race coefficient. She noted this would be especially helpful for programs with a larger waiting list population.

The MAC Chair commented that programs do not need to wait for a proposal to be developed to eliminate the use of the race coefficient from its eGFR formula. He encouraged the members to share this consideration with their teams.

Next steps:

Members were encouraged to provide additional feedback via email or comment on the request for feedback on the OPTN website.

2. Update on OPTN Regional Review Project (Executive Committee)

UNOS staff provided an overview on the OPTN Regional Review Project. The OPTN is seeking feedback on how regions, or a different model, can best fulfill the functions below for OPTN members and stakeholders.

Summary of discussion:

The use of regions is being reviewed because the OPTN, donation and transplant community, and organ allocation policies have undergone significant change since OPTN Regions were created in the late 1980's. The goal of the project is to reevaluate the structure, processes, performance, and effectiveness of regions while considering the current and future needs of the nation's donation and transplant community. In 2020, there was an initial request for community input and in 2021, an external vendor, EY, was selected to lead the project. EY reviewed community input, studied the OPTN system, conducted interviews, and prepared recommendations for Board of Directors (BOD) to review.

EY developed three proposed models but the community is encouraged to identify ideas from the different models to put together what will be most effective for the OPTN moving forward, rather than focus on selecting one of the three models as a whole.

The three models proposed are:

- Communities of Common Interest
- Repurposed Regions
- Hybrid Cohorts

After receiving feedback during the current public comment period, EY will create a final report for the BOD. If there are any proposed changes to the OPTN Regions, governance structure, or policy and bylaws, the proposal will go through another public comment period.

A member commented that they value the diversity the current model allows, noting that she gains valuable insights from her interactions with organ procurement organizations (OPOs). The members agree that it is important to avoid silos. The Chair commented that the whole system benefits from interacting with the various member types (transplant programs, OPOs, etc.) and disciplines. She also noted that she has learned a lot from interacting with programs of varied sizes as well as programs with other differences such as non-academic and rural programs.

The Chair commented that Transplant Administrators *especially* need to have oversight on all the various aspects of transplant and would find it more challenging if a new structure was segmented by organ type or member type. She shared that connections have been built over the years with peers in her region and has mixed feelings about changes. She acknowledged that the regional structure may need updating but is unsure what that update should look like.

A member commented that her program has arranged regular meetings with OPOs outside of its region in response to allocation changes which have caused her program to interact with more and different OPOs. She shared that establishing these new relationships has promoted operational improvements

but commented that she is unsure how to translate this necessary relationship building into a new regional structure.

A member asked if the new OPO regulations from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and its potential impact to donor service areas have been considered by EY when developing the proposed models. UNOS staff commented that this was not looked into specifically and offered to share any additional considerations with the EY team.

Next steps:

Members were encouraged to review the request for feedback document on the OPTN website and provide comment or complete the feedback form.

3. Future Vice Chair Identification

Summary of discussion:

UNOS staff shared that the goals of the Vice Chair nomination and selection process are to increase transparency, promote inclusivity, and complete a thorough review and vetting of Vice Chair candidates. A new process was implemented in 2021 after being piloted in 2020. This process starts with a call for nominations. Next, information for those that express interest is reviewed by Committee members and several identified candidates are selected. The selected candidates are then interviewed by the current TAC Chair and Vice Chair. The primary and secondary candidates are then recommended to the OPTN President-Elect for consideration and final appointment.

The call for nominations will run from September through October. The Committee will select their top candidates in October and then the potential candidates will interview with the current Chair and current Vice Chair sometime between October and December. At the end of December, the primary and secondary recommendations are submitted for consideration to OPTN President-Elect and the new Vice Chair will be appointed in January.

The Chair and Vice Chair have identified a list of preferred qualifications. Members were invited to provide additional feedback about the list presented.

Next steps:

Members were encouraged to provide input about the preferred qualifications for the Vice-Chair position.

Upcoming Meeting

- September 10, 2021

Attendance

- **Committee Members**
 - Denise Neal
 - Deonna Moore
 - Erica Seator
 - Jason Huff
 - Megan Fairbank
 - Melissa Porter
 - Melissa Roberts
 - Michelle James
 - Nancy Metzler
 - Rachel Hatmon
 - Scott Wansley
 - Stephanie Johnson
 - Susan Zylicz
 - Deb Maurer
- **UNOS Staff**
 - Angel Carroll
 - Joann White
 - Kaitlin Swanner
 - Kelley Poff
 - Kristina Hogan
 - Lindsay Larkin
 - Sarah Konigsburg
 - Susan Tlusty
- **HRSA Representatives**
 - Vanessa Arriola
- **Other Attendees**
 - Paulo Martins