OPTN Liver and Intestinal Organ Transplantation Committee
Meeting Summary
August 27, 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 08/27/2021 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Redeveloping MELD-NA: LSAM Request

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

1. Redeveloping MELD- NA: LSAM Request

The Committee developed a Liver Allocation Simulation Model (LSAM) modeling request for an updated Model for End-Stage Liver Disease (MELD) score.

Summary of discussion:

The Committee reviewed potential MELD models. Members clarified that adding both sex and height was not advised as this would create noise in the model because the two variables are collinear. A member suggested that the Committee could develop NLRB guidance that would assist short men in receiving additional priority in an effort to address existing disparities in access to transplant. Another member responded that body surface area may be more accurate than height when matching appropriately sized donor organs to recipients because a donor's height does not always correspond with their AP chest diameter. A member suggested that body surface should be considered as an access variable when the Committee begins work on Continuous Distribution of livers. A member suggested the Committee request data on waiting times for short men compared to women.

The Committee determined they would move forward with including a sex variable in the LSAM request. Members compared the MELD 3.0 model to the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients (SRTR) derived score MELD-NA (sodium) model. Members also considered adding albumin to the model. A member expressed interest in adding albumin to the LSAM request, as it helps differentiate low MELD candidates. The Committee agreed to include MELD 3.0 with and without albumin in the LSAM request.

The Committee also discussed whether or not the new MELD model should be capped at 40 or if it should be uncapped. The Committee determined uncapping these models could add unnecessary complexity and supported capping the new MELD model at 40.

Upon reviewing potential stratifications for the LSAM request, a member asked if Rural-Urban commuting area (RUCA) codes were the best method for measuring urbanicity. A member responded that it could be worthwhile to look into any alternative methods for measuring urbanicity. Another member noted that the Cumulative Community Risk Score (CCRS) was added in an attempt to better estimate urbanicity of an area. A HRSA representative requested that the modeling also include stratification by state and OPTN region.

<u>Next steps:</u>

The LSAM results are slated for October.

Upcoming Meeting

- September 3, 2021

Attendance

- **Committee Members**
  - Peter Abt
  - Sophoclis Alexopoulos
  - Diana Alonso
  - Sumeet Asrani
  - Scott Biggins
  - Kimberly Brown
  - Derek DuBay
  - James Eason
  - Alan Gunderson
  - Allison Kwong
  - Greg McKenna
  - James Markmann
  - James Pomposelli
  - Jorge Reyes
  - Kym Watt
- **HRSA Representatives**
  - Jim Bowman
  - Marilyn Levi
- **SRTR Staff**
  - Katie Audette
  - Tim Weaver
  - Andrew Wey
- **UNOS Staff**
  - Matt Cafarella
  - Betsy Gans
  - Samantha Noreen
  - Liz Robbins Callahan
  - Niyati Upadhyay
- **Other Attendees**
  - Emily Perito (OPTN Pediatric Transplantation Committee Vice Chair)