

**OPTN Ethics Committee  
Meeting Summary  
April 18, 2024  
WebEx Meeting**

**Andrew Flescher, PhD, Chair  
Sanjay Kulkarni, MD, Vice Chair**

## **Introduction**

The Ethics Committee (“Committee”) met via WebEx teleconference on 4/18/2024 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Debrief: Xenotransplantation Memo to OPTN Executive Committee
2. Ethical Analysis of Allocating Organs Out of Sequence: White Paper

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

### **1. Debrief: Xenotransplantation Memo to OPTN Executive Committee**

**The Committee did not make any decisions.**

#### Summary of discussion:

The Committee briefly recapped the Executive Committee’s April 16th meeting reviewing the xenotransplantation memo. It was noted that the Executive Committee had positive feedback of the memo.

#### Next steps:

The Committee is expected to hear additional feedback from the Executive Committee.

### **2. Ethical Analysis of Allocation Organs Out of Sequence: White Paper**

**The Committee decided to use the OPTN Membership and Professional Standards (MPSC) Committee’s definition of allocation out of sequence for their white paper.**

#### Presentation Summary:

The Vice Chair presented the following information:

The OPTN Policy Oversight Committee met and considered the Allocation out of Sequence (“AOOS”) white paper on April 11, along with the OPTN Executive Committee considering it on April 16. Both voted to approve the paper. The Executive Committee gave support as a topic of priority for the OPTN. Some Executive Committee members gave concern over the title of paper and not addressing “root causes” of AOOS.

The Chair reminded the Committee of the scope of the issue for AOOS. Staff reminded members of the project timeline.

The Chair gave ideas on proposed project outline, covering the introduction and background section. The Vice Chair reviewed the outline covering balance of utility and respect and balance of utility and

equity. The Chair emphasized that utility will be centered in this white paper. The Vice Chair stated that AOOS justice and utility can be examined through a variety of lenses, including geographic and health disparities, and lack of uniformity in organ procurement organization/center practice, as well as the ways these problems are exacerbated. The Chairs discussed the importance of transparency and notification systems in Allocation out of Sequence.

The Vice Chair continued that the conclusion would include resolution of ethical conflicts, including benefits of out of sequence offers, as well as examining consistency and transparency in AOOS.

#### Summary of Discussion:

A member asked how much AOOS tends to deviate from the match run priorities, i.e., how consistent are inconsistencies. The Chair answered that this should be looked at in the data request. The Vice Chair continued that this is a magnitude and transparency issue, including the lack of communication in AOOS. A member commented that it would be helpful to include background in steps for AOOS offers, as well as consequences for administration, for all readers. This member also commented that quality of AOOS organs should be looked at in the paper.

The Chair went over the background supporting the upcoming data request. The data request background was covered by the Chair. The Committee considered the definition of a “Rescue pathway.” Research staff stated that non-use is not included in AOOS data if a bypass is not recorded. The Vice Chair stated that the Membership and Professional Standards (MPSC) Committee database can be looked at for reviewing annual AOOS, and research staff confirmed. A member commented that transplant center match-run variances should be looked at. The definition that the MPSC uses states that anything AOOS is considered a rescue pathway, and the committee affirmed use of this definition. Research staff discussed timeframe and organs of interest, with a focus on kidney.

A representative from Health Resources and Services Administration asked if COVID may impact the data, and suggested not to include 2021 data, so as to not skew the results. Research staff responded that this may be relevant and could be noted if needed.

Members asked to include race, age, income, geography (travel times, procurement), waiting time, and distance in data request. Further potential data requests were highlighted. Research staff stated that standard organ utilization for donors will be compared to MPSC’s AOOS definition to provide full insight into transplantation.

#### Next Steps:

Staff will use the feedback from today’s call to draft the data request.

#### **Upcoming Meeting(s)**

- May 16, 2024

## **Attendance**

- **Committee Members**
  - Andy Flescher
  - Sanjay Kulkarni
  - Carrie Thiessen
  - Sheila Bullock
  - Andrew Courtwright
  - Keren Ladin
  - Lisa Paolillo
  - Marilyn Levi
  - Lois Shepherd
  - Megan Urbanski
  - Felicia Wells-Williams
  - Sena Wilson-Sheehan
- **HRSA Representatives**
  - Jim Bowman
- **UNOS Staff**
  - Kieran McMahon
  - Jamie Panko
  - Cole Fox
  - James Alcorn
  - Katrina Gauntt
  - Kim Uccellini
  - Houlder Hudgins
  - Kristina Hogan
- **Other Attendees**
  - Laura Butler