

OPTN Minority Affairs Committee

Meeting Summary

March 10, 2025

Conference Call

Alejandro Diez, MD, Chair
Oscar Serrano, MD, Vice Chair

Introduction

The OPTN Minority Affairs Committee (the Committee) met via WebEx teleconference on 03/10/2025 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Public comment review: Monitor Ongoing eGFR Modification Policy Requirements
2. Public comment item: Barriers Related to the Evaluation and Follow-Up of International Living Donors

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

1. Public comment review: Monitor Ongoing eGFR Modification Policy Requirements

The Committee reviewed feedback received to date, identified emerging themes, and began discussing potential revisions to the proposal based on public comment.

The Committee considered the following questions for discussion:

- What questions does the Committee have about the feedback so far?
- What themes are emerging?
- At this point, should post-public comment changes be considered?

Summary of discussion:

No decisions were made.

Committee members acknowledged that the proposed requirements would increase the workload for transplant programs and noted that this feedback was anticipated. However, they considered the added burden justified given the potential equity gains and benefits to patients.

Some public comment feedback raised concerns about the requirement for retroactive candidate notifications, which would obligate transplant programs to notify all kidney candidates registered on or after January 4, 2024, of their eligibility and/or outcome. One member acknowledged that while retroactive work increases the burden on programs, coordinators remain committed to patient care. Another member agreed, emphasizing that patient benefit should outweigh administrative burden, particularly in advancing equity for historically disadvantaged groups. Overall, the Committee affirmed that, despite the additional effort, prioritizing what is right for patients is paramount.

The Committee also considered a recommendation from the OPTN Membership and Professional Standards Committee (MPSC) to require transplant programs to notify candidates within 30 days of receiving the modification outcome from the OPTN. One member initially expressed concern that a 30-day timeframe might be too limited, particularly for larger or higher-volume programs. However, other

members noted that the requirement would apply prospectively and only to candidates for whom a modification was submitted, suggesting the number of affected patients would be relatively low. Another member referenced current practices and stated that a 30-day window is reasonable, especially given the importance of timely patient notification.

Next steps:

The Committee will review the public comment analysis and vote on the proposed language at its next meeting on March 31, 2025.

2. Public comment item: Barriers Related to the Evaluation and Follow-Up of International Living Donors

The Committee provided feedback on a public comment item from the Ad Hoc International Relations Committee (AHIRC) titled Barriers Related to the Evaluation and Follow-Up of International Living Donors.

Summary of discussion:

No decisions were made.

A member asked the presenter how many individuals are coming to the U.S. as international living donors. The presenter explained that while recipient data is available, data specific to international living donors is more difficult to capture. To address this gap, the Ad Hoc International Relations Committee (AHIRC) distributed a survey to transplant programs across the United States. The Committee hopes that responses will provide greater insight into the demographics of international living donors, including where in the U.S. they reside. Additionally, the survey aims to clarify how the transplant community interprets terms such as “non-citizen resident” and “non-resident.” One member expressed appreciation for the AHIRC’s efforts to understand how these terms are defined by the community.

Another member supported the development of the guidance, noting that it could help standardize the process, particularly for programs that only see one or two international living donors annually. A member referenced part of the proposed guidance encouraging international living donors to complete as much of their preliminary evaluation as possible in their home countries and asked whether variations in international laboratory standards might pose challenges when compared to U.S. benchmarks. The presenter acknowledged this concern, stating that such discrepancies would need to be addressed on a case-by-case basis and would depend on the donor’s country of origin. They further emphasized that this issue highlights the importance of cultural competency, which is a central component of the guidance, particularly in recognizing differences across international healthcare systems.

Another member remarked that while the number of affected patients may be small, international living donors can be considered a vulnerable population, making this guidance particularly important. This member asked whether there are any recognized medical translation services that could assist with translating electronic medical records. They also raised concerns about potential immigration barriers should a donor need to return to the U.S. for post-donation care. The presenter noted that AHIRC has discussed similar concerns and acknowledged that obtaining a visa can indeed be a significant challenge.

Next steps:

A public comment based on the discussion today will be drafted, approved by Committee leadership, and posted on the Committee’s behalf.

Upcoming Meetings

- March 31, 2025, 2:30- 4:30pm ET
- April 21, 2024, 3-4pm ET

Attendance

- **Committee Members**
 - Alejandro Diez
 - Oscar Serrano
 - Anthony Panos
 - April Stempien- Otero
 - Catherine Vascik
 - Christy Baune
 - Donna Dennis
 - Hilda Fenandez
 - Niviann Blondet
 - Ruben Quiros- Tejeira
 - Sandy Edwards
 - Steven Averhart
- **SRTR Staff**
 - Bryn Thompson
 - Warren McKinney
- **UNOS Staff**
 - Alex Carmack
 - Kelley Poff
 - Meng Li
 - Tamika Watkins
- **Other Attendees**
 - Cynthia Fortland