

**OPTN Liver and Intestinal Organ Transplantation Committee
National Liver Review Board (NLRB) Subcommittee**

May 7, 2025

Conference Call

James Pomposelli, MD, PhD, Chair

Introduction

The OPTN National Liver Review Board Subcommittee (the Subcommittee) met via WebEx teleconference on 05/07/2025 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Continuous Distribution & Review Boards
2. Project Ideas

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

1. Continuous Distribution & Review Boards

The Subcommittee discussed whether other instances unrelated to medical urgency should warrant a non-standard exception pathway in liver continuous distribution.

Summary of discussion:

A member stated that exceptions often address both medical urgency and patient access. Another member agreed and stated the metabolic diseases are a good example of exceptions for the purposes of patient access. The member stated that having non-standard exception pathways for circumstances related to patient access may be important in a continuous distribution system.

A member stated that it is more important to analyze whether exception candidates are receiving the appropriate level of priority within continuous distribution rather than which category the exceptions align with.

Another member stated that if non-standard exceptions were broadened beyond medical urgency that it could result in an influx of non-standard exceptions for all sorts of various situations that would be difficult to draft guidance on.

A member reminded the Subcommittee that transplant programs can currently submit a non-standard exception for anything but acknowledged that the NLRB likely would not approve it. Another member responded that while that is the current state, a lot of the non-standard exceptions that are submitted are modelled on current guidance documents and policy. The member added that if the patient access attributes are functioning like they are intended to, then there should not be a need for non-standard exceptions.

The Subcommittee discussed the complexity of having to determine how many points to request under the goal of patient access. A member acknowledged that the lung review board is currently functioning this way but it may not be beneficial to add this layer of complexity into liver continuous distribution.

The Subcommittee will bring this topic to the full Committee for discussion.

Next steps:

The Committee will discuss this topic during the May 15, 2025 meeting.

2. Project Ideas

The Subcommittee discussed various project ideas.

Summary of discussion:

The Subcommittee discussed how the median MELD at transplant (MMaT) calculation does not include DCD transplants. A member noted that for some transplant programs, DCD transplants can account for almost half of their transplant volume. So not including DCD transplants into the MMaT calculation might be misconstruing what is happening nationally. The member noted that including DCD into the MMaT calculation would require understanding the impact on exception candidates relative to lab candidates.

Another member stated that the current state may be giving exception candidates a boost for DCD transplants. The Vice Chair agreed and stated that most of the exception candidates at their transplant program are receiving a DCD transplant.

A member stated that the usage of DCD is so variable so it may be hard to predict but it would be important to understand the impact to the system.

Another member stated that the original rationale for not including DCD may not be applicable anymore. The member explained that DCD transplant is more prevalent now, outcomes are not as different, and technological advancements are making logistics easier.

The Subcommittee discussed an idea that would allow for the original candidates to receive a higher priority score if their incompatible living donor that donates to someone else on the waitlist. Members agreed that the concept of this idea was interesting but struggled to figure out how it could be operationalized.

The Subcommittee considered updating the definition of pre-existing liver disease in the criteria for Status 1A.

Next steps:

The Committee will discuss additional project ideas during the May 15, 2025 meeting.

Upcoming Meetings

- TBD

Attendance

- **Subcommittee Members**
 - Allison Kwong
 - Cal Matsumoto
 - Chris Sonnenday
 - Mike Kriss
 - Neil Shah
 - Shimul Shah
- **SRTR Staff**
 - David Schladt
 - Katie Siegert
- **UNOS Staff**
 - Alina Martinez
 - Ben Schumacher
 - Betsy Gans
 - Joel Newman
 - Keighly Bradbrook
 - Laura Schmitt
 - Matt Cafarella
 - Niyati Upadhyay