

Ethical Evaluation of Multiple Listing

OPTN Ethics Committee

Rationale for White Paper

- This is an ethical analysis of the impact of multiple listing on the patient and transplant system, with the goal of promoting equitable access for everyone in need of an organ transplant
- The OPTN Ethics Committee makes recommendations to Board of Directors for changing, creating, or eliminating policies if warranted by ethical concerns
- White papers are developed to analyze complex ethical issues
 - White papers often develop a stance on an issue or offer recommendations for future work
 - White papers do not change policy or dictate practice

Purpose of White Paper

- Conducts an ethical analysis of multiple listing and consider how the practice fares against the ethical principles of transplant
 - Equity (including distributive justice and procedural justice), autonomy, and utility
- Answers the question: “what are the ethical implications of permitting patients to be listed at multiple transplant programs?”

Ethical Principles

- **Equity:** Fairness in the pattern of distribution of the benefits and burdens of organ allocation
 - **Distributive justice:** Requires fairness in the distribution of scarce resources so that patients of similar need have an equal opportunity to benefit from transplantation
 - Formal equality of opportunity: developing rules and policies that equally apply to all patients
 - Fair equality of opportunity: developing rules and policies that each individual has a fair chance to equally exercise opportunity within those rules and policies
 - **Procedural justice:** Upholds a commitment to treating like cases similarly, transparently, and predictably

Ethical Principles

- **Autonomy:** One's ability to be self-directing, have a decisive impact on what happens to oneself in the future, and, in terms of transplant, the ability to participate in decisions that lead to medical treatment
- **Utility:** Maximization of net benefit (including promoting graft survival, reducing waste, and improve efficiency)

White Paper

- Analyzes the ethical principles as they apply to multiple listing
- Considers whether data depicting the access and utilization of multiple listing reflects sociodemographic disparities
 - Aligns data with corresponding ethical principles
- Develops recommendations to utilize multiple listing to equalize access for patients instead of exacerbating existing disparities

Key Findings

- Utilization of multiple listing is patterned in a way that aligns with sociodemographic disparities
- Widespread use of multiple listing may undermine equity and utility by allowing some patients to benefit from receiving organ offers from two centers simultaneously
- Multiple listing should be reserved for patients who are medically complex and otherwise hard to match
 - Support and resources should be provided to aid these patients in multiple listing
 - Other OPTN Committees will need to determine the criteria for medically complex or hard to match patients

What do you think?

- Do community members have recommendations about how access to multiple listing can be encouraged for patients who are exceptionally difficult to match?
- Do community members have recommendations about how to better direct patients who are seeking multiple evaluations?
- Do community members agree with the recommendations?
- How do patients feel about the recommendations?