

OPTN Liver and Intestinal Organ Transplantation Committee

Meeting Summary

July 18, 2025

Conference Call

Scott Biggins, MD, Chair

Shimul Shah, MD, MHCM, Vice Chair

Introduction

The OPTN Liver and Intestinal Organ Transplantation Committee (the Committee) met via WebEx teleconference on 07/18/2025 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Continuous Distribution Update
2. Project Prioritization

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

1. Continuous Distribution Update

No decisions were made.

Summary of discussion:

The Chair shared that HRSA has directed the OPTN to pause work on continuous distribution (CD). Committee members expressed concern about the implications of the pause, particularly regarding the potential loss of momentum and innovation. It was clarified that the pause is not a cancellation and that progress on other high-priority projects may allow CD work to resume.

Members discussed how the Committee could pivot to projects that are independent of CD but still align with the OPTN's priorities, such as addressing out-of-sequence allocation and improving efficiency.

Next steps:

The Committee will identify and prioritize projects that can proceed during the CD pause and contribute to broader OPTN goals.

2. Project Prioritization

In light of the CD pause and OPTN resource constraints, the Committee discussed potential new projects to pursue.

Summary of discussion:

The Committee agreed to pursue a project that will encompass numerous updates to OPTN policy, all aimed at improving efficiency in the allocation process.

The Chair presented an overview of previous project ideas discussed by the Committee.

The Committee agreed to pursue a bundled project under the theme of optimizing liver allocation, which includes:

- HCC Stratification: Members supported moving forward with this project independently of CD, noting it is already well-developed and would be impactful. They also discussed potential updates to HCC policy to increase the number of exception requests that are auto-approved by the NLRB system.
- Update to Multivisceral Transplant (MVT) Guidance: This update would increase priority for MVT candidates, addressing an ongoing concern about these candidates' access to appropriate donors.
- Lab Update Schedule Modifications: This proposed change would reduce the required frequency for updating labs for adult candidates with a Model for End Stage Liver Disease (MELD) score of 25 or higher. This will address concerns raised by the transplant community regarding the increased use of Terlipressin.
- Status 1A Definition Update: This update would clarify the Status 1A criteria for candidates with pre-existing liver disease.
- Donor Acceptance Criteria: This update would remove restrictions for candidates who weigh more than 100 lbs from accessing donors who weigh less than 40 lbs.

The Committee remains interested in a separate project that would explore an incompatible living donor-candidate paired swap, but noted this is more complex and needs more development.

The Committee also discussed the following projects for future consideration:

- Removing donation after circulatory death (DCD) donors from the median MELD at transplant calculation.
- Donor Modifiers: The Committee planned to incorporate donor modifiers into CD and discussed the feasibility of incorporating them in the current allocation system.
- Status 1 Prospective Review: This would allow transplant programs to select for Status 1A exception cases to be reviewed prospectively, as opposed to retrospectively
- AP Diameter and Biopsy Criteria: This project would collect donor AP diameter and more specific biopsy information in order to increase allocation efficiency.

Next steps:

The Committee will continue to refine the scope of their projects and begin to prepare to bring the liver allocation bundle to the Policy Oversight Committee (POC) for review.

Upcoming Meetings

- August 1, 2025 at 2 pm ET (teleconference)
- August 15, 2025 at 2 pm ET (teleconference)

Attendance

- **Committee Members**
 - Lloyd Brown
 - Michael Kriss
 - Allison Kwong
 - Chris Sonnenday
 - Vanessa Pucciarelli
 - Neil Shah
 - Christine Radolovic
 - Scott Biggins
 - Aaron Ahearn
 - Vanessa Cowan
 - Kathy Campbell
 - Marina Serper
 - Shunji Nagai
 - Omer Junaidi
- **SRTR Staff**
 - Nick Wood
 - Ray Kim
 - Katie Siegert
 - Jack Lake
 - David Schladt
- **UNOS Staff**
 - Keighly Bradbrook
 - Ben Shumacher
 - Meghan McDermott
 - Betsy Gans
 - Matt Cafarella
 - Alina Martinez
 - Niyati Upadhyay