

OPTN Ethics Committee

Meeting Summary

January 19, 2023

Conference Call

Keren Ladin, PhD, Chair

Andrew Flescher, PhD, Vice Chair

Introduction

The Ethics Committee met via Citrix GoToMeeting teleconference on 1/19/2023 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Regional Meetings and Reminders
2. National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) Report Recommendations and Committee Project Discussion
3. Update on NRP White Paper & Timeline

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

1. Regional Meetings and Reminders

Regional meetings run January 26 through March 10 and regional representatives will present the Multiple Listing white paper during their respective meetings. The Chair shared the feedback she received when presenting the white paper to the OPTN Board of Directors and provided guidance on what kind of feedback the Committee is anticipating hearing in regional meetings. The in-person meeting will be held on March 31st in Detroit, Michigan. Members are asked to complete a short survey to indicate their availability to attend the meeting in person.

Summary of discussion:

A member inquired what would happen to patients already multiple listed if a policy change were to occur. The Chair clarified that this is not included in the white paper since the white paper does not modify policy, but suggested grandfathering in the existing multiple listed patients. A member clarified that a pathway would still be available for some patients to multiple list, though. The white paper recommends utilizing multiple listing for medically complex or hard to match patients, while also recognizing that the qualifying criteria will need to be identified by other OPTN Committees.

Next steps:

Please reach out to staff if you need to register for a different regional meeting prep session. Staff will develop a Frequently Asked Question document for members to use to assist them in answering questions at their regional meetings.

2. National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) Report Recommendations and Committee Project Discussion

Staff presented the OPTN-specific recommendations from the NASEM Report "Realizing the Promise of Equity in the Organ Transplantation System," and the OPTN Board of Directors discussions to date on these recommendations. The OPTN Policy Oversight Committee (POC) has asked each Committee to

discuss the NASEM recommendations and provide a list of potential projects for the OPTN to undertake. These project recommendations could be specifically for the Ethics Committee or for other Committees.

Summary of discussion:

The Chair noted that while reducing organ discard has been a primary focus of the transplant community, this report is focused on equity and the responsibility to improve equity falls on the shoulders of the Ethics Committee.

Project recommendations included:

- Expediting multi-organ transplant (MOT) policies similar to the simultaneous liver-kidney (SLK) policy and safety net.
- Including MOT in transplant program metrics in order to hold them more accountable for their outcomes.
- Reviewing MOT policy to provide clearer guidance on when allocation shifts from MOT patients to single organ and what occurs in the instance of a late turndown.
- Requiring Cystatin-C testing in kidney disease evaluation, as opposed to allowing transplant centers to select the testing method they would like to use.
- Increasing early waitlist registration for kidney patients due to the benefits of preemptive kidney transplant.
- Requiring medical workups within a specific time frame after waitlist evaluation.
- Developing guidelines to resolve any issues that arise in the operating room around which perfusion method to pursue.
- Reviewing the process of deciding to allocate out of sequence if an organ is consistently being denied in an attempt to reduce organ discard.
- Considering the potential to use a deceased donor kidney to initiate a paired kidney donation chain which would lead to more transplants.
- Guidelines around allocating end of chain kidneys in a paired exchange.

The Chair suggested that equity should hold a higher percentage of the OPTN Strategic Plan. The Chair enquired if there is a potential for the Ethics Committee to evaluate policies post-implementation to consider if the targeted impacts on equity and utility were achieved. The chair noted that sometimes post-implementation goals are not appropriately aligned with equity and utility, or align with both, and it would be valuable to evaluate policies from the lens of improving equity or utility. Staff responded that they would need to follow up on how to proceed with that internally.

A member suggested developing a standardized approach for imminent death donation (IDD) for organ transplant and recommended revisiting the Ethics Committee's previous paper on the topic.¹ The member suggested that IDD could increase the number of organs available for donation and reduce waiting times for kidney transplant. Given this, and other analyses, the member feels the community may be more supportive of the topic now than in years previous. Staff will do some internal review on the conclusion of the previous white paper and follow up with leadership.

Next steps:

The POC will discuss these recommendation as part of their in-person meeting in March.

¹ OPTN Ethics Committee, *Ethical Considerations of Imminent Death Donation*, December 2016, <https://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/professionals/by-topic/ethical-considerations/ethical-considerations-of-imminent-death-donation-white-paper/>.

3. Update on Normothermic Regional Perfusion (NRP) White Paper & Timeline

The Chair informed the Committee that the NRP Workgroup is currently in the process of writing the white paper, with Ethics Committee members as their primary authors. The Committee is slated to vote on the white paper on March 16 for a special public comment cycle in April. With this timeline, the white paper would still proceed to the OPTN Board of Directors for approval at their June 26th meeting.

Summary of discussion:

A member inquired if regional representatives would be required to present the white papers to their regions during a special public comment. Outreach for special public comment will differ from the standard public comment cycle where Committee leadership will most likely hold national webinars to present the white paper. Regional representatives will not present any information about the NRP white paper during their Multiple Listing presentation at regional meetings.

Upcoming Meetings

- February 16, 2023
- March 16, 2023
- March 31, 2023
- April 20, 2023
- May 18, 2023
- June 15, 2023

Attendance

- **Committee Members**
 - Andy Flescher
 - Carrie Thiessen
 - David Bearl
 - Ehab Saad
 - Erica Stohs
 - Felicia Wells-Williams
 - George Bayliss
 - Jen Dillon
 - Keren Ladin
 - Laurel Avery
 - Megan Urbanski
 - Sena Wilson-Sheehan
 - Thao Galvan
- **HRSA Representatives**
 - Jim Bowman
 - Marilyn Levi
- **SRTR Representatives**
 - Bryn Thompson
- **UNOS Staff**
 - Cole Fox
 - Houlder Hudgins
 - James Alcorn
 - Kieran McMahon
 - Kim Uccellini
 - Krissy Laurie
 - Kristina Hogan
 - Laura Schmitt
 - Matt Belton
 - Rebecca Murdock
 - Stryker-Ann Vosteen