

OPTN Ad Hoc International Relations Committee

Meeting Summary

August 23, 2022

Conference Call

Pramod Bonde, MD, Chair

Peter Stock, MD, Vice Chair

Introduction

The OPTN Ad Hoc International Relations Committee met via Citrix GoTo Meeting teleconference on 08/23/2022 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Follow-up: Annual Report
2. Recap: International Living Donor Project Idea
3. Literature Review

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

1. Follow-up: Annual Report

The Committee continued discussing any follow-up questions and comments from the 2021 annual report.

Summary of discussion:

A Committee member asked how many non-citizen resident (NCR) transplants have been done by organ type.

The presenter replied that the annual report focuses on non-U.S citizens/non-residents (NCNR) per *OPTN Policy 17.1.B: Review of Non-US Citizens/Non-US Resident Registrations and Transplants*.

However, the presenter will follow up with the research team regarding NCR transplants by organ type.

A member noted that regarding last month's presentation on the annual report, it is startling to see how many NCR there are because NCRs are the most at risk for not having access to transplantation. The member stated that NCRs contribute to our society and donate, so they should have access to transplantation. Therefore, although the 2021 annual report mainly focuses on data regarding NCNR, understanding the number of NCRs who received a transplant by organ type may be helpful.

2. Recap: International Living Donor Project Idea

The Committee heard a recap of last month's committee project idea. The Committee is interested in providing guidance on properly evaluating, accepting, and following up with international living donors.

Summary of discussion:

The Committee Chair suggested splitting the international living donor project idea into two separate projects. The Chair suggested that one project could be a white paper that would seek to understand the concerns of the current system to accept, evaluate, and follow up on international living donors and a suggested framework for the system. The other part of the project could be a follow-up project focusing on the impacted population.

Another member highlighted another concern with the current system is that there are many barriers to obtaining a visa. For example, suppose an individual living in the U.S for a transplant has a sibling in another country who wishes to be a donor. In that case, the donor may experience barriers to obtaining a visa to donate their organ to their sibling.

3. Literature Review

The Committee heard a literature review presentation on the following articles.

- Care of International Living Kidney Donor Candidates in the U.S
- Evaluation and Care of International Living Kidney Donor Candidates
- International Travel for Living Donor Kidney Donation

Summary of discussion:

A member noted that the presentation provides an outline for where the Committee could leverage some resources to support future Committee projects.

A member asked about how to start the process of obtaining a visa for organ donation.

A member replied that during last month's meeting, there was a discussion about the State Department issuing visas and suggested that there needs to be a visa specifically for transplants. The member noted concerns that a medical need does not necessarily mean a visa is expedited, and the term medical can refer to many different types of medical conditions that require treatment in the U.S. The member questioned if creating a particular category for solid organ transplants would require a statutory change or whether the state department has the discretion to make a regulation that could be issued. The member pointed out that the State Department might better receive regulatory change if it came from a broad coalition.

Upcoming Meeting(s)

- September 27, 2022
- October 25, 2022

Attendance

- **Committee Members**
 - Pramod Bonde
 - Peter Stock
 - Abby Ruiz
 - Arjun Naik
 - Chang Liu
 - Eliana Agudelo
 - Nancy Long
 - Scott Sanoff
 - Sylvia Villalon
- **HRSA Representatives**
 - Vanessa Arriola
 - Jim Bowman
- **SRTR Staff**
- **UNOS Staff**
 - Tamika Watkins
 - Meghan McDermott
 - Robert Hunter
 - Krissy Laurie
 - Kim Uccellini
- **Other Attendees**
 - Katie Siegert