

OPTN Liver and Intestinal Organ Transplantation Committee

Meeting Summary

July 21, 2023

Conference Call

Scott Biggins, MD, Chair
Shimul Shah, MD, Vice Chair

Introduction

The OPTN Liver and Intestinal Organ Transplantation Committee (the Committee) met via Citrix GoToMeeting teleconference on 07/21/2023 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Welcome, Visiting Board Member Introduction, and Implementation Updates
2. National Liver Review Board (NLRB) Subcommittee Update and New Project Discussion
3. Medical Urgency Rating Scale in Continuous Distribution

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

1. Background: Next Steps in Continuous Distribution

The Chair welcomed the Visiting Board Member. The Committee was updated that their previous project *Improving Liver Allocation: MELD, PELD, Status 1A and Status 1B* was implemented on July 13, 2023. Additionally, the *National Liver Review Board (NLRB) Guidance for Multivisceral Transplant Candidates* will be implemented July 27, 2023.

2. National Liver Review Board (NLRB) Subcommittee Update and New Project Discussion

The Committee reviewed the ongoing work of the NLRB Subcommittee. The NLRB Subcommittee has been developing a project to add three diagnoses to the Adult Other Diagnosis Guidance document and update OPTN policy to continue to align with Liver Reporting and Data Systems (LIRADS) standards.

Summary of discussion:

A member expressed hesitancy for the inclusion of guidance for the diagnosis of downstaged intrahepatic cholangiocarcinoma. The Chair responded that the NLRB Subcommittee can explore whether guidance is needed. The Chair noted that one option is to have guidance specify that exceptions are not warranted given the current data.

The Chair asked the Committee whether there is support to send this project to the OPTN Policy Oversight Committee and the OPTN Executive Committee for project approval. No objections were voiced.

Next steps:

The Committee will continue to be provided updates from the NLRB Subcommittee as they develop the project.

3. Medical Urgency Rating Scale in Continuous Distribution

The Committee discussed potential rating scales for the medical urgency attribute within liver continuous distribution.

Summary of discussion:

The Chair noted that ensuring candidates with Status 1A are at the top of match runs is very important.

An SRTR representative suggested the Committee consider whether MELD should remain capped at 40. The SRTR representative also suggested the Committee consider the literature that observed candidates that remain at Status 1A for an extended period of time begin to have less medical urgency than candidates with a MELD score of 40. The Chair stated that a future discussion may be to consider whether Status 1A priority requires a sunset period or review the criteria to ensure specificity.

Some members expressed interest in analyzing the potential impact of uncapping MELD. The Chair reminded the Committee the previous discussions regarding a potential attribute for post-transplant survival. The Chair stated that one reason the Committee decided to not incorporate post-transplant survival as an attribute was due to the fact that MELD is capped. A member stated that while post-transplant survival may not be an attribute in the continuous distribution framework, it will remain important to review survival outcomes.

The Chair suggested reviewing outcomes of candidates receiving Status 1A on top of their lab MELD scores.

Another member supported using 90-day waitlist mortality as the basis for a medical urgency rating scale. The member explained that 90-day waitlist mortality has been utilized in liver historically, it has worked, and the approach should not change with the shift to continuous distribution. The Chair agreed it is an intuitive timeframe for the community.

A member noted that candidates with high MELD scores and Status 1A priority are part of the waitlist and recommended that the Committee also focus on ensuring that a continuous distribution system is designed to also create pathways to transplant for candidates whose MELD scores are in the 20s.

Upcoming Meeting

- August 4, 2023 @ 3:00 PM ET (teleconference)
- August 18, 2023 @ 3:00 PM ET (teleconference)

Attendance

- **Committee Members**
 - Allison Kwong
 - Christopher Sonnenday
 - Christina Radolovic
 - Colleen Reed
 - Dev Desai
 - Erin Maynard
 - Joseph DiNorcia
 - Kathy Campbell
 - Kym Watt
 - Lloyd Brown
 - Neil Shah
 - Scott Biggins
 - Sophoclis Alexopoulos
 - Tovah Dorsey-Pollard
 - Vanessa Pucciarelli
- **HRSA Representatives**
 - Jim Bowman
 - Marilyn Levi
- **SRTR Staff**
 - Jack Lake
 - Katie Audette
 - Nick Wood
 - Ryo Hirose
 - Tim Weaver
- **UNOS Staff**
 - Betsy Gans
 - Erin Schnellinger
 - Katrina Gauntt
 - Kayla Balfour
 - Laura Schmitt
 - Lauren Mauk
 - Susan Tlusty