

OPTN Donation after Circulatory Death Policy Review Workgroup

Meeting Summary

February 12, 2025

Conference Call

Lori Markham, RN, MSN, CCRN, Chair

Introduction

The OPTN Donation after Circulatory Death (DCD) Policy Review Workgroup (the Workgroup) met via WebEx teleconference on 02/12/2025 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Continue review of OPTN Policy 2.15 and timing of family discussion

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

1. Continue review of OPTN Policy 2.15 and timing of family discussion

Presentation Summary

Timing of Family Discussions

Project Scope - National Organ Transplant Act (NOTA)

"The Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) shall...adopt and use standards of quality for the acquisition and transportation of donated organs 42 USC § 274 (b)(2)(E)"

The timing of donation discussions is within scope of the OPTN but should not be too prescriptive.

Changes to the OPTN policy regarding the timing of donation discussions with potential donor families should facilitate a process that:

- Remains free of coercion or undue influence on the family
- Ensure the potential donor family is informed about all options in a timely and appropriate manner.
- Honors the wishes of the potential donor.
- It is flexible to the unique circumstances of each potential donor.
- To the extent possible and balancing the previous factors, maximizes the gift of organ donation.

The Workgroup should remember that any proposed changes will be released for public comment and that the OPTN Organ Procurement Organizations (OPO) Committee will be able to amend policy in response to public comments.

The Workgroup reviewed policy language drafted by the Chair as a starting point.

Summary of Discussion:

No decisions were made regarding this agenda item.

Some Workgroup members expressed concerns over changing the language regarding the timing of discussions with families about organ donation. A few members noted that if the Workgroup did propose such a significant change in policy that the policy would need to be explicit in its wording so that the community members were aware of the shift. The Chair noted that there could be questions for the community during public comment to gauge public response to such a change and to make it clear what these changes look like in practice.

The Workgroup discussed crafting new policy that differentiates rules and timing for the discussion of organ donation between patients who have chosen to donate also known as first-person authorization, and families who may choose to donate. The Workgroup felt that trying to address both first-person authorization and a family's decision to donate in the same paragraph may be complicated. For increased clarity, many felt that separate instructions should be given for each scenario regarding timing of the discussion to donate.

The Workgroup also discussed who is allowed by policy to have a conversation about organ donation with potential donor families. The Chair noted that Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has specific requirements for who is allowed to engage in discussions of organ donation and that some states may have their own additional requirements. The Workgroup debated how involved the OPOs needed to be in the conversation based on where a potential donor family was in the process of making life sustaining decisions about their family members.

Next steps:

- Update suggested family discussion paragraph of policy and send it to the Workgroup for review prior to the next meeting.

Upcoming Meeting

- March 12, 2025

Attendance

- **Committee Members**
 - Lori Markham
 - Anja DiCesaro
 - Bob Truog
 - Dan DiSante
 - Chadrick E Denlinger
 - Felicia Wells-Williams
 - Greg Veenendaal
 - Lois Shepherd
 - Kaitlyn Fitzgerald
 - Sharyn Sawczak
 - Prine Anand

- **SRTR Staff**
 - Jon Miller
 - Katie Siegert

- **UNOS Staff**
 - Matt Cafarella
 - Susan Tlusty
 - Alina Martinez
 - Kevin Daub
 - Ethan Studenic
 - Houlder Hudgins