



# OPTN Board Special Election Update

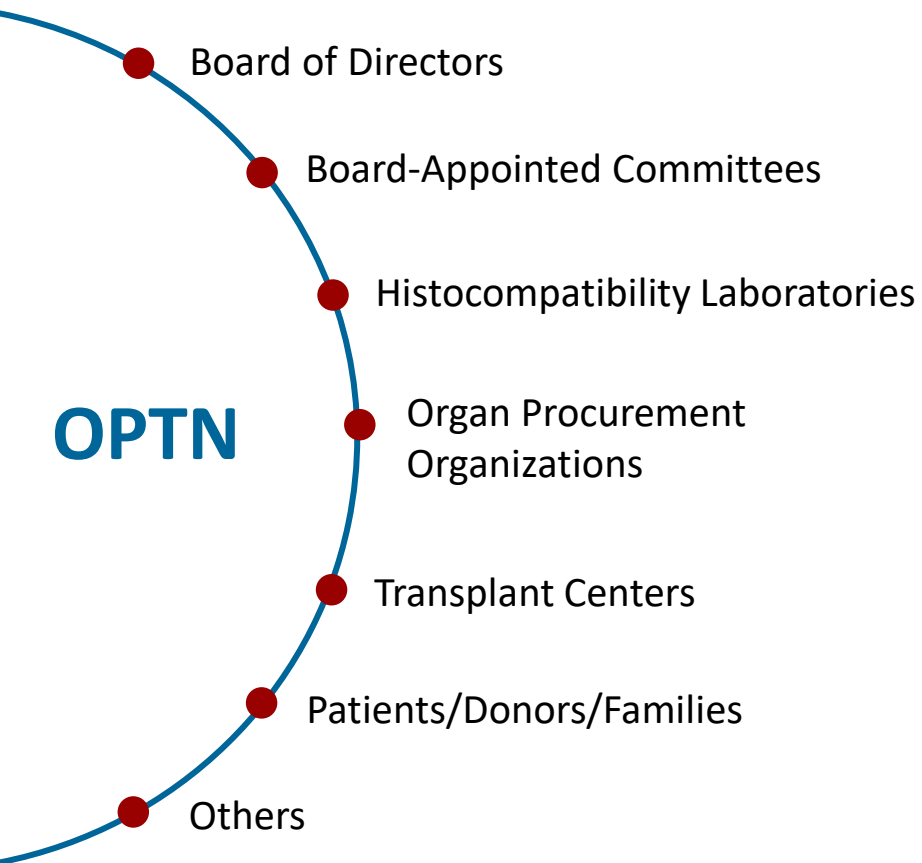
*February 28, 2025*

**Health Systems Bureau (HSB)**

**Vision: Healthy Communities, Healthy People**



# OPTN Board of Directors Overview



The OPTN Board is the governing body that **oversees and participates in policy development** for OPTN operations.

The OPTN Board adheres to **Final Rule**

- Specific Board of Directors representation
- The Board responsibilities include:
  - ✓ Organ allocation policies with public input
  - ✓ OPTN membership criteria
  - ✓ OPTN management and membership policies

**OPTN members elect** the OPTN Board of Directors

There are approximately **20 standing committees**, plus ad hoc and subcommittees made up of volunteer OPTN members.



# Separating the OPTN Board from Contractor Boards

The OPTN Board of Directors was one-and-the-same as the OPTN contractor's corporate Board of Directors.

- This raised issues about potential conflicts of interest within OPTN governance.
- In July 2024, as part of the OPTN Modernization, the OPTN Board of Directors became a separate entity from the OPTN contractor's Board.
- Since the separation, Board members and the election process have remained the same, so potential conflicts of interest may not have been fully mitigated.



# Secretarial Authority to Hold Special Election

- As the federal designee to oversee the OPTN, HRSA issued a Designation Agreement to formalize the relationship with the nonprofit entity INVEST.
  - Designated INVEST to operate as the OPTN Board of Directors.
  - Defines roles and responsibilities.
- The Designation Agreement states that the **HHS Secretary may hold a special election for the OPTN Board of Directors** when the Secretary determines that doing so is in the best interest of the OPTN.
- Similar to the 1984 Task Force created to identify the first OPTN Board of Directors, **the Transitional Nominating Committee (TNC) and special election** is a critical step in HRSA's commitment to **strengthen OPTN governance** and advance the **goals of OPTN Modernization**.



# Formation of the Transitional Nominating Committee

HRSA formed the Transitional Nominating Committee (TNC) to support the special election process.

- Temporary and transitional – only created for the special election. TNC will be dissolved after the special election.
- Comprised of transplant surgeons and physicians, organ procurement organizations, transplant hospitals, transplant candidates, recipients, donors, and family members as well as individuals that bring additional expertise to support robust governance for the OPTN as outlined in NOTA and specified in Final Rule.



# Members of the Transitional Nominating Committee

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## **Chair: General Janet Wolfenbarger (Ret. USAF), MS**

Retired United States Air Force Four-Star General; Member, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Corporation; Member, Board of Directors, AECOM (an infrastructure firm); Former Chair, Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services; Trustee, U.S. Air Force Academy Falcon Foundation (2016–Present)

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## **Co-Chair: Pamela D. Paulk, MSW, MBA**

Former President, Johns Hopkins Medicine International; previously Senior VP for Human Resources, Johns Hopkins Medicine; Living Kidney Donor

**Andre Dick, MD, MPH**, Surgeon-in-Chief, Seattle Children’s Hospital

**Colleen Jay, MD**, Surgeon and Director, Living Donor Program, Wake Forest University

**Dominic Adorno, MS**, President & CEO, DonorConnect

**Edward V. Hickey, III, JD**, President, American Association of Kidney Patients; Chronic Kidney Disease patient, caregiver, and family member of transplant recipient

**Eric Gibney, MD**, Nephrologist and Program Director, Piedmont Transplant Institute in Atlanta, GA

**Gena Johns, RN, BSN**, Program Manager, Kidney/Pancreas Transplant, University of Florida Shands Transplant Center in Gainesville, FL

**Lisa M. Lee, PhD, MA, MS**, Former Executive Director, Presidential Bioethics Commission; Former Chief of Bioethics, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research

**Lorrinda Gray-Davis**, President, Transplant Recipients International Organization; liver transplant recipient

**Margie Shaw, PhD, JD**, Director, Clinical Ethics, University of Rochester Medical Center in Rochester, NY

**Sean C. Kumer, MD**, Surgeon, Chief Medical Officer and Vice President, University of Kansas Health System

**Yesenia Diaz, BS**, Founder and General Contractor, Industry Grade Construction Group; two-time kidney transplant recipient



# Special Election Preparation Activities



**JANUARY 2025**

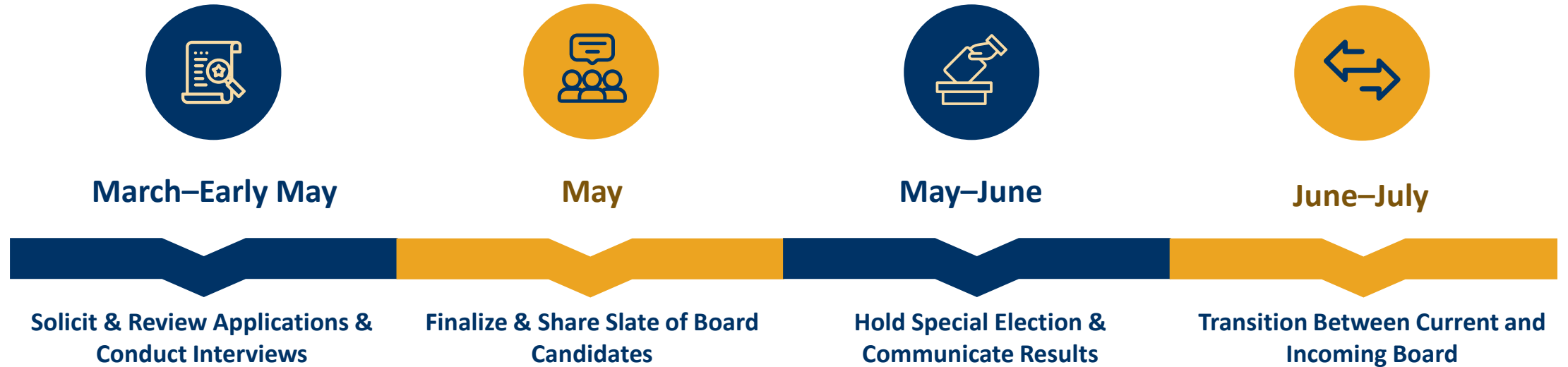
- HRSA announced TNC members



**FEBRUARY 2025**

- The TNC finalized the following:
  - OPTN Board candidate selection criteria
  - Conflict of interest (COI) disclosure form
  - Nomination, review, scoring, and interview processes to be applied in identifying candidates to serve on the OPTN Board

# Special Election Timeline



*\*Timeline is tentative and subject to change.*





# Board Composition

- Approximately **50%** transplant surgeons or transplant physicians
- At least **25%** transplant candidates, transplant recipients, organ donors, and family members, representing the diversity of this population and not employed by or with similar relationships to the below category
- **Remainder composed of representatives** of organ procurement organizations (OPOs), transplant hospitals, voluntary health associations, transplant coordinators, histocompatibility experts, non-physician transplant professionals, and the general public



Image Source: [Pixabay](#)



# Community Feedback and TNC Determination on Selection Criteria



## Community Feedback

Consider individuals who currently serve on the Board, including members who joined the Board July 2024, or served on the Board in the past; recommend shorter “cooling-off” than 10 years.

Include ethicists, legal experts, histocompatibility experts, donor families, members of underrepresented communities, transplant professionals and patients of all types, and OPO representatives as members of the Board.

Continue representation on the Board from the 11 OPTN Regions.

Ensure representation of pediatric advocates and experts, including pediatric medical (non-surgical) providers.



## TNC Determination

10-year “cooling-off” period for this Special Election to ensure a clean slate that is free of conflicts; does not preclude individuals from running in the next or future Board election cycles.

Prioritize representatives from these categories.

Ensure continued representation on Board from the 11 OPTN regions.

Include pediatric representatives.

# Exclusion Criteria



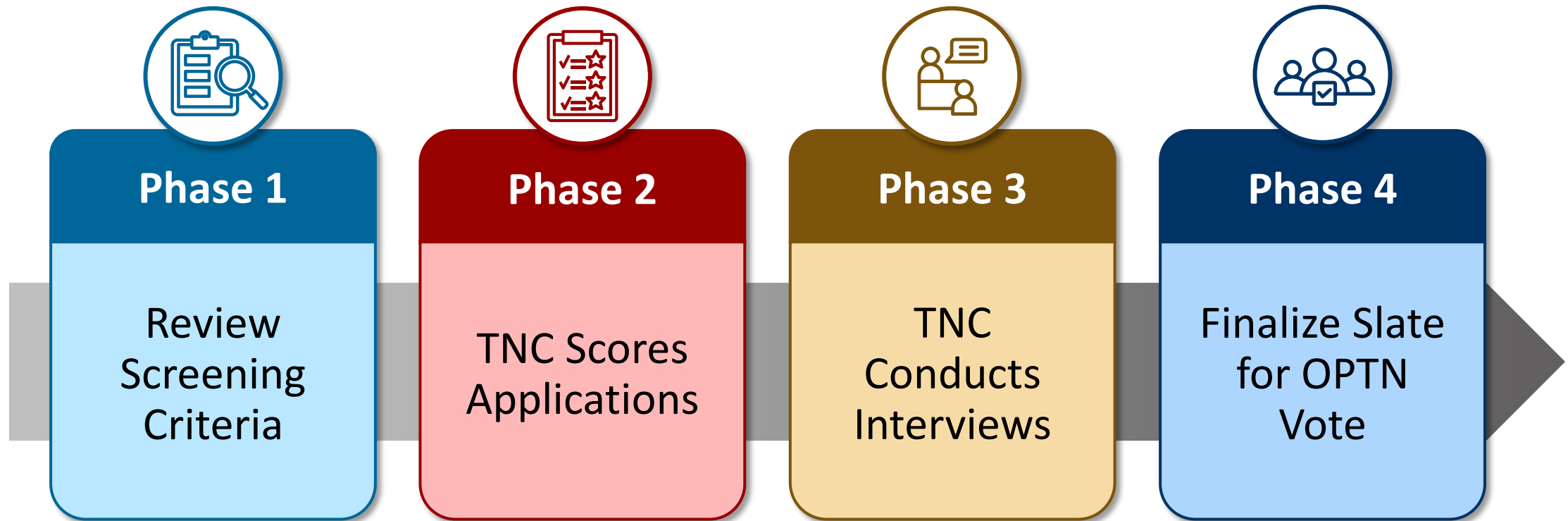
Image Source: [Pixabay](#)

The following exclusion criteria will apply for this Special Election only:

- Currently serving on the OPTN Board or served on the OPTN Board in the last 10 years
- Currently has, or in the past 12 months had, financial, personal, business, or professional relationships with the OPTN or members of the OPTN Board outside of and beyond their primary known role/title
- Is employed by or a subcontractor to the current OPTN Board Support Contractor, the OPTN Operations Support Contractor, the OPTN Discovery Contractors, and/or other OPTN Contractors
- Is personally, or is employed by an entity that is, pending criminal, serious ethics, or regulatory disciplinary action
- Availability of less than 12 hours per month
- Current TNC member



# Phased Process to Review Applications



# Screening and Scoring Applicants

## Screening Criteria:

- Availability (i.e., at least 12 hours per month)
- Alignment with Modernization (e.g., commitment to improving patient safety, building and maintaining trust with the public, and ensuring accountability and transparency of the OPTN Board)
- Conflicts of Interest (COIs) (e.g., situations in which a person is in a position to derive personal benefit from actions or decisions made in their official OPTN capacity)

## Scoring Criteria:

TNC members will score applicants primarily on their experience based on their position and any demonstrated experience in ethics, finance, governance, and/or logistics or operations.

- Organ transplant professionals
- Individuals with lived organ transplant experience
- Non-transplant professionals



# Special Election Process

- List of nominees and their personal statements will be available for review by voting members one week before the Special Election is held.
- OPTN members will have choices on different positions specified on the ballot.
- Members in each region will vote on choices for their new regional representatives in addition to other positions.
- Voting will be virtual.



Image Source: [Pixabay](#)

# Transition and Terms

- We will work to support appropriate transition knowledge transfer.
- Committee members have been asked to extend terms by one year, ensuring continuity with policymaking and processes.
- The current Board, with HRSA oversight, will seek replacements for committee members who choose not to extend their terms.

# Call for Nominations

- Call for nominations will remain open for four weeks, **from March 3 to April 4, 2025.**
- Applicants will complete a volunteer interest form and conflict of interest (COI) disclosure form.
- During the application period, the link for the volunteer interest form and COI disclosure form will be available at <https://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/news/apply-now-optn-board-of-directors/>
- Send nominations to [OPTNBoardSupport@air.org](mailto:OPTNBoardSupport@air.org).





# Thank you

## Questions? Comments?

Contact the OPTN Board Support Team at [OPTNBoardSupport@air.org](mailto:OPTNBoardSupport@air.org)

