

UNOS and the OPTN

Getting Involved in the Public Comment Process

Under contract with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Services and Resources Administration (HRSA), the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) coordinates the nation's organ transplant system, providing vital services to meet the needs of men, women and children awaiting lifesaving organ transplants. This nationwide system is called the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN). UNOS, acting as the OPTN contractor, unites transplant professionals and organ procurement specialists throughout the nation to match transplant candidates with the organs they need.

The field of organ transplantation depends on the cooperation of many people and organizations, and it is vital to ensure the opinions of all interested parties are heard and addressed. Therefore, the OPTN strives to achieve consensus in the development of policies that determine how organs are allocated throughout the nation.

Committees within the OPTN review transplant data and issues and periodically may draft a new or revised policy to address a particular issue. Before going to the OPTN/UNOS Board of Directors for a vote, UNOS publishes all substantial policy proposals for public comment by other committees, OPTN/UNOS regions and interested persons or organizations. The sponsoring committee will consider all comments received before it makes a final recommendation to the board. The board then considers policy proposals in light of the input received.

Final decisions about policy proposals are published on the OPTN and UNOS sites. A policy notice detailing all board-approved policy changes is sent to OPTN/UNOS members and other interested parties approximately 30 days after the board meeting. This notice includes all implementation dates that are available at time of publication.

Input from transplant candidates – the people most affected by new or revised policy – is an important part of the public comment process. The OPTN strongly encourages all interested individuals – especially transplant candidates – to express their views on policy proposals by getting involved in the public comment process.

You can view proposals that go out for public comment several ways. You can visit the OPTN and UNOS web sites directly at www.optn.org or www.unos.org, or you can send an e-mail to publiccomment@unos.org and sign up to receive e-mail notification of the document. If you are unable to access the Internet, you can receive a paper copy of the document by calling or faxing a request to the UNOS public comment coordinator. You may also submit a written request to UNOS.

For more information, please contact:

Public Comment Coordinator

United Network for Organ Sharing

700 North 4th Street

Richmond, VA 23218

Phone: (804)782-4877

Fax: (804) 782-4896

E-mail: publiccomment@unos.org

Specific questions about policy proposals can be answered by the UNOS Regional Administrator for your area. Please consult the listing below to determine your regional contact person.

Shannon Edwards (edwardsf@unos.org)

Region 1 - Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Eastern Vermont

Region 4 - Oklahoma, Texas

Region 9 - New York, Western Vermont

Betsy Gans (gansel@unos.org)

Region 2 - Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Northern Virginia, West Virginia

Region 6 - Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington

Region 8 - Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Wyoming

Clifton McClenney (mcclence@unos.org)

Region 3 - Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Puerto Rico

Region 11 - Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia

Chrystal Oley-Graybill (graybioe@unos.org)

Region 5 - Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah

Region 7 - Illinois, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin

Region 10 - Indiana, Michigan, Ohio