



UNOS 2024 Priorities

Actions to strengthen the U.S. organ donation and transplant system

Strengthening the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN)

The United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) is committed to working with the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service (HHS), Congress and others to assist in carrying out [HRSA's Modernization Initiative](#) to better serve America's organ donors, transplant patients and their families. To ensure the safe and efficient modernization of the OPTN, UNOS is advocating for:

- **Fully funding the Administration's [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2025 budget request](#) to ensure HRSA can implement its vision for OPTN modernization.**

Additional UNOS and OPTN Actions, Education & Outreach

- The seven-member [UNOS board of directors](#) began their terms on March 30, 2024. The UNOS and OPTN board of directors are separate for the first time in 40 years.

Enhancing Organ Transportation

Before September 11, 2001, organs intended for transplant traveled in the passenger cabin on commercial flights. Due to protocol changes after the attacks, unaccompanied organs were relegated to cargo and are still transported as such today. To ensure organs are transported safely, timely, and efficiently through the nation's commercial air system, UNOS is advocating for:

- An OPTN centralized tracking system for organs intended for transplant.

Additional UNOS Actions, Education & Outreach

UNOS successfully advocated for the Securing Growth and Robust Leadership in American Aviation Act, which requires the Department of Transportation, in coordination with the Federal Aviation Administration, to convene a workgroup that will identify solutions for organs to fly in the main cabin of an airplane and improve transportation. The FAA held the first working group meeting in August 2024. Their work is expected to inform policy improvements that would not require going through the federal rulemaking process.

- UNOS developed and is spearheading transportation innovations to make it easier to track and transport organs, including the [UNOS Organ Tracking Service](#) and the [UNOS Travel App](#).

Improving Data Collection

On October 4, 2024, U.S. Representatives Rob Wittman, Jennifer McClellan, Mariannette Miller-Meeks, and Jim Costa introduced the Organ Donation Referral Improvement Act. UNOS has worked alongside congress to develop this legislation, which will improve data collection on potential organ donors to drive system improvements and increase patient safety.

Specifically, the bill directs the HHS Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) to conduct a voluntary national study of automated electronic deceased donor referral to identify best practices and recommend steps for its broad adoption. Automated electronic deceased donor referral replaces the standard practice of manually notifying OPOs of potential deceased donors, lifting the burden of reporting off busy hospital staff, reducing the risk of human error, and ensuring every potential donor is referred. Widespread use of automated electronic deceased donor referral could increase the number of organ donors and reduce the number of Americans waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant.

Increasing Equity & Access to Donation & Transplant

UNOS is acutely attuned to issues of equity. As the mission-driven nonprofit serving as the nation's transplant system under contract with the Federal government, UNOS works with its community partners to ensure equitable policies and outcomes. For UNOS and everyone in the donation and transplant community, the ultimate form of equity means providing a transplant for every single patient that needs one. To improve equity and access to donation and transplant, UNOS is advocating for:

• **Authorization For the OPTN to collect pre-waitlist data to identify barriers in access to the national transplant waitlist.** Research^{1,2} shows there are inequities in transplant access, though the source of these inequities is unknown because the OPTN is not authorized to collect pre-waitlist data. Following OPTN advocacy, the [draft data directive HHS released in February 2024](#) included authorization for the OPTN to collect pre-waitlist data.

- [The Increase Support for Life-Saving Endocrine Transplant \(ISLET\) Act \(H.R. 4304 / S.2205\)](#)
- [The Living Organ Donor Tax Credit Act \(H.R. 6171\)](#)
- [The Living Donor Protection Act \(H.R. 2923 / S. 1384\)](#)
- [The Charlotte Woodward Organ Transplant Discrimination Prevention Act \(H.R. 2706\) \(S.1183\)](#)
- [The Honoring Our Living Donors Act \(H.R. 6020\)](#)

¹ Gander, Jennifer C., Xingyu Zhang, Laura Plantinga, Sudeshna Paul, Mohua Basu, Stephen O. Pastan, Eric Gibney, et al. "Racial Disparities in Preemptive Referral for Kidney Transplantation in Georgia." *Clinical Transplantation* 32, no. 9 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1111/ctr.13380>.

² Hutcheson 55, Phillips V, Patzer R, Smith A, Vega JD, Morris AA. Impact of insurance type on eligibility for advanced heart failure therapies and survival. *Clin Transplant*. 2018;32(8):e13328.