

August 4, 2022

UNOS Statement on the Senate Committee on Finance Hearing

Yesterday, UNOS CEO Brian Shepard appeared before the Senate Committee on Finance to testify about the role of United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) and the organ donation and transplant community's ongoing efforts to save lives and further improve the national system.

We were disappointed by the Senate Committee on Finance's misunderstanding of the role UNOS has been assigned by the government within the nation's organ donation and transplant system. To clarify some of the confusion, here are the facts about what we do:

- As required in the Health and Human Services (HHS) Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) contract, UNOS utilizes confidential peer-review, a highly effective process in use across the healthcare system, to promote hospital and OPO quality. Meanwhile, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) holds oversight authority, including OPO certification and decertification. These roles are distinct, specified and critical to the system.
- The IT system designed, operated and maintained by UNOS is highly effective, safe and secure, fending off more than three million hacker attempts per day. The U.S. Digital Service (USDS), which released a negative report on our IT infrastructure, didn't come onsite to review it. However, The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) routinely conducts onsite audits of the system and has never found any of the purported deficiencies outlined by USDS.
- OPOs determine the best, safest way to transport donor organs. Transplant hospitals and OPOs coordinate between each other to ensure safe and timely transport and UNOS only becomes involved if contacted by one of these bodies. Though it is outside the scope of the HHS contract, UNOS responded to community needs by developing a GPS tracking tool that a quarter of OPOs now utilize.

We were also very concerned that the Committee did not reference the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Mathematics (NAEM) yesterday, even though their [important report](#), which was commissioned by Congress, includes many recommendations that our community is already undertaking and applauded UNOS' approach to increasing equity through a new organ allocation framework.

We remain dedicated to addressing these misperceptions and are looking forward to working with Congress to further improve. The U.S. organ donation and transplantation system is the most successful in the world and will soon exceed one million transplants in its history. Each represents a patient whose life was transformed. UNOS is proud of the community we have helped build and looks forward to continuing working together to serve all patients who rely on us.