

## **History of the Pulmonary Hypertension Guidelines Distributed by the OPTN Contractor**

On November 20, 2006, the Thoracic Organ Transplantation Committee issued “Guidelines for Special Case Reviews for Candidates with Pulmonary Hypertension” to lung transplant clinicians and program administrators. This document defined clinical criteria that the LRB should consider when reviewing requests for higher LAS for PH candidates. These criteria were: patient deteriorating on optimal therapy; right atrial pressure greater than 15 mm Hg; and, cardiac index less than 1.8 L/min/m<sup>2</sup>. The Thoracic Organ Transplantation Committee recommended that programs submit exception requests for higher LAS for PH candidates that met all three criteria.

Since the implementation of the LAS in 2005, the Thoracic Organ Transplantation Committee has spent considerable time evaluating the system on candidates with all diagnoses, and recognized that the LAS may not be fully identifying and accurately reflecting an increase in waiting list mortality associated with an acute worsening of pulmonary hypertension patients.

In 2011, the Lung Subcommittee of the Thoracic Organ Transplantation Committee discussed the PH criteria required for LAS exception submissions. The Lung Subcommittee was concerned that the requirement for PH candidates to meet all three clinical criteria did not effectively identify all patients who would be appropriate for a score exception. Based on these concerns and additional feedback from the Thoracic Committee and lung transplant community, additional edits were made to this notice in July, 2011.

The following is an example of the PH guidelines distributed to the thoracic community:

### **UNet<sup>SM</sup> System Notice – 07/29/11**

#### **Submitting Lung Allocation Score Exception Requests for Candidates Diagnosed with Pulmonary Hypertension**

##### **Audience**

We are providing this information to all lung transplant physicians, lung transplant surgeons, lung transplant coordinators, UNet<sup>SM</sup> Site Administrators, transplant program directors, and data coordinators at lung and heart/lung transplant programs. Please share this notice with anyone in your organization who would benefit from this information.

##### **Guideline**

Lung transplant candidates diagnosed with pulmonary hypertension (PH) and who meet the following criteria may qualify for an increase in their Lung Allocation Score (LAS):

1. Patient is deteriorating on optimal therapy, and
2. Patient has a right atrial pressure greater than 15 mm Hg *or* a cardiac index less than 1.8 L/min/m<sup>2</sup>.

To request an increase in a PH candidate's LAS, transplant programs must submit an exception request to the Lung Review Board (LRB); this request should include sufficient clinical detail to support that the patient meets the above criteria.

If the transplant program believes that its patient has similar waiting list mortality and potential transplant benefit as a PH patient meeting the criteria listed above, then it should provide a detailed narrative on that assertion, referencing literature supporting the request for a higher LAS. When submitting an exception request, transplant programs must provide a clinical justification for the exception. Please refer to [Policy 3.7.6.4 \(Lung Candidates with Exceptional Cases\)](#) for additional information about the exception review process.

Policy 3.7.6.4 allows a transplant program to submit a request for an LAS, an estimated value for one of the tests that is used to calculate the LAS, or an assignment to a diagnosis group for a disease that is not listed in Waitlist<sup>SM</sup>.

*Note: The LRB will render clinical judgment on exception requests for higher LAS, diagnosis, or estimated value.*

Transplant programs may wish to submit to the LRB an exception request for the candidate's LAS to be at the national 90<sup>th</sup> percentile (see table below).

The LAS for all active candidates greater than or equal to 12 years of age waiting for lung transplants as of July 22, 2011 are as follows:

<b>Number waiting</b>	<b>25<sup>th</sup> percentile</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>75<sup>th</sup> percentile</b>	<b>90<sup>th</sup> percentile</b>	<b>95<sup>th</sup> percentile</b>	<b>99<sup>th</sup> percentile</b>
1365	32.7	34.6	38.8	45.9	52.4	84.8

If you have questions, please contact the UNet<sup>SM</sup> Help Desk at 1-800-978-4334 or [unethelpdesk@unos.org](mailto:unethelpdesk@unos.org). You may also contact your review board staff member:

Regions 1, 2, 5, 9, 10 and 11 – Aaron McKoy (804) 782-6575

Regions 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8 – Lori Gore (804) 782-4732