



Despite advances in the field of organ transplantation, a critical shortage of donated organs still exists in the United States. Recent media attention has drawn into question the current system that governs the manner in which deceased donor organs are distributed and allocated. The Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) is charged by the government to facilitate this activity. OPTN policy development is a deliberative, dynamic process that includes frequent and significant input through a public comment process and final approval by a representative board that includes clinicians, living organ donors, donor families, and recipients. The National Organ Transplantation Act (NOTA) established this process to ensure that both current medical science and patients' perspectives are at the forefront.

As no policy can guarantee that all patients receive donated organs when the rate of organ donation does not match the number of patients who desperately need this life-saving treatment, the American Society of Transplant Surgeons (ASTS) and the American Society of Transplantation (AST) strongly encourage efforts to increase the number of organs donated from both pediatric and adult deceased donors, as well as efforts to increase living donation when possible. More than 118,023 candidates are waiting for an organ transplant as of June 5, 2013; 1,628 of these candidates are waiting for a lung transplant. Moreover, approximately 19 wait list candidates for lung transplantation died each month in 2012 waiting for a transplantable organ.

ASTS and AST support OPTN policies that are based on the best available medical judgment, scientific evidence, and principles of equality, and a continuous refinement of OPTN policies to best serve patients done in an organized and deliberative fashion. We believe it would be unwise to change or otherwise obfuscate current policy without the deliberative approach mandated within NOTA.

#### **About the American Society of Transplant Surgeons (ASTS)**

Established in 1974, the American Society of Transplant Surgeons (ASTS) is the oldest transplant society, serving more than 2,000 surgeons, physicians, scientists, pharmacists, coordinators, and advanced transplant providers. ASTS is committed to fostering the practice and science of transplantation and guiding those who make policy decisions by advocating for comprehensive and innovative solutions to the needs of our members and their patients. ASTS is a nonprofit organization located in Arlington, VA. For more information, visit [www.ASTS.org](http://www.ASTS.org).

#### **About the American Society of Transplantation (AST)**

The American Society of Transplantation (AST) is an international organization of transplant professionals who are dedicated to advancing the field of transplantation and improving patient care by promoting research, education, advocacy, and organ donation. The Society comprises more than 3,200 transplant physicians, surgeons, scientists, and allied health professionals. For more information about the Society, go to [www.myAST.org](http://www.myAST.org).

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