Participants Named for National Pilot Project for Kidney Paired Donation

Four organizations representing more than 80 kidney transplant programs nationwide have been selected to enroll patients and potential living donors in a national pilot project to facilitate kidney paired donation (KPD) transplants. Kidney paired donation involves the coordinated matching of living donors with medically compatible recipients in cases where the original intended recipient is not compatible with his or her potential donor.

The national Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN), operated under federal contract by United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), will coordinate the project. Its goals include assessing whether more compatible matches are made possible through a large pool of donors and candidates, as well as studying the feasibility of implementing a national program.

The following organizations, each affiliated with a number of additional transplant programs, will participate in the initial phase of the pilot:

- Alliance for Paired Donation, Maumee, Ohio
- Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Md.
- UCLA Medical Center/California Pacific Medical Center, Los Angeles and San Francisco, Calif.

"Each group was chosen for its experience with kidney paired donation and its willingness to broaden the availability of this procedure to a much wider group of people needing transplants," said James Wynn, M.D., president of the OPTN and UNOS and chair of the OPTN/UNOS Board of Directors. "Kidney paired donation offers the possibility of hundreds more transplants per year, perhaps over a thousand per year as the transplant community gains more experience. In turn this may enhance opportunities for more candidates to get deceased donor transplants."

Participants replied to an OPTN request for proposal and were selected by a group drawn from the OPTN/UNOS Kidney Transplantation Committee, the Kidney Paired Donation Work Group and OPTN/UNOS leadership. No member of the selection group was directly affiliated with any of the applicants. In addition, all information identifying the specific applicants was blinded to allow the group to focus on objective criteria in each application.

"In addition to the thousands of hours of volunteer expertise donated by kidney professionals and the living donation community," said Dr. Wynn, "this program depends on the gracious support of project partners, charitable gifts and in-kind donations. The software to be used in the matching process has been donated by various institutions, and we continue to be guided by the people and programs with the greatest expertise in kidney paired donation."

The Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) is operated under contract with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Division of Transplantation by the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS). The OPTN brings together medical professionals, transplant recipients and donor families to develop organ transplantation policy.