

Up for More

Mile-high TMF offers plenary, breakout and feedback sessions

BY KAREN SOKOHL

I've attended UNOS' Transplant Management Forum (TMF) for nearly half of its 19 iterations, and I've never been disappointed. This year's forum, held April 18–20 in downtown Denver, was no exception.

An audience of 427 transplant professionals—primarily transplant administrators and managers but also OPO staff, physicians, surgeons and coordinators—enjoyed two and a half jam-packed days of sessions, exhibits and networking.

Spirited plenary discussions included an hour-long talk by Steven Lipstein, president/CEO of BJC Healthcare in St. Louis, on the current state of health-care reform and its expected impact on medical institutions and transplant programs.

Another popular plenary was a physician–executive panel, with the panelists discussing how they might need to reposition their organizations for greater effectiveness as resource scarcity continues to have an impact on cost, quality and choice.

OPTN/UNOS president Charles Alexander, RN, M.S.N., M.B.A., gave a talk on current and evolving UNOS priorities, particularly the changes involving OPO performance metrics.

The comprehensive selection of breakout sessions is another TMF favorite. The breakouts are organized so that attendees can pick from the track most appropriate for them—Transplant 101 (for the novice administrator), Transplant 102 (focusing on issues relevant to the more seasoned administrator), data-related issues and updates on clinical practice.

Options for the breakout sessions included the following:

- OPTN and UNOS bylaws rewrite project
- the most popular listserv topics
- OPTN/UNOS kidney paired donation (KPD) program
- Data, data, data...where does it go? [UNOS Primer preview]
- UNOS staffing survey design [feedback session]

Interested in attending next year's Forum? Start planning now—scheduled for April 25–28, the celebratory 20th annual TMF will be held at the Wyndham Rio Mar Beach Resort and Spa in Puerto Rico (visit wyndham.com/hotels/SJURM/main.wnt?cid=ROMGWB).

As promised in the March–April *Update* (“Staffing Survey Released,” p. 25), the following is a summary of input received at the feedback session on design of UNOS' annual staffing survey. The session was hosted by the OPTN/UNOS transplant administrators committee's (TAC's) staffing survey workgroup.

STAFFING SURVEY DESIGN FEEDBACK

UNOS' staffing survey, accessible through UNetSM, allows administrators to generate comparative statistics for their region, program type and program size. But only those administrators who provide their own data are able to view the data entered by other programs. Still, overall participation by programs nationwide is less than what TAC members would like to see.

With that in mind, the TAC's staffing survey workgroup hosted an hour-long feedback session, “Putting the Fun Back in the UNOS Staffing Survey,” on ways to improve the survey. Despite being the final session of a busy day, nearly 40 attendees gathered for what was fruitful brainstorming and discussion.

Organizers of the session also served as its moderators: workgroup chair Nancy Long, RN, CCTC, director, CVOR/cardiac and renal transplant, Saint Luke's Hospital, Kansas City, Mo., and Amy Peele, RN, transplant director of clinical operations, University of California–San Francisco Medical Center. Presenting summary data and providing technical/data support was survey developer Jude Maghirang, M.S., UNOS research systems manager.

Most of the comments centered around two issues—education and technical design.

The feedback on education focused on promotion—how to increase awareness of the survey and effectively communicate its benefit. Many felt that it was important to develop a communication plan to help ensure that appropriate folks knew about the staffing survey.

It's also necessary to articulate to administrators what's “in it for them,” attendees said, and why the administrators need to fill out the survey. The group will continue to discuss possible incentives for survey completion. A possible prize drawing at the TMF is the top idea.

Comments on the survey's technical design were, well, somewhat more technical.

“Filling it out is *easy*,” an attendee said. “The hard part is *gathering* the necessary data—knowing what information to collect and the best way to collect it.” Many thought a UNOS-sponsored webinar on what to do before you ever sit down to complete the survey would be extremely useful.

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ABOVE: This year's keynote speaker was Steven H. Lipstein, president/CEO of BJC Healthcare in St. Louis. His keynote address was on health-care reform.

Others expressed frustration at having tried to translate the survey results into language that nontransplant administrators—such as their hospital's senior leadership—would understand. Some expressed difficulty in trying to explain the relevance of the results to senior management, saying that they said would appreciate a format that would “translate better.”

Along the same lines, some said that the pretransplant information was well designed, but the posttransplant information was difficult to navigate and sort through. Many attendees mentioned that they appreciated the staffing survey and saw it as a valuable benchmarking tool.

Overall, a number of excellent suggestions on improving the design of UNOS' staffing survey were made at the session. Those suggestions will be considered by the TAC staffing survey workgroup and implemented as appropriate.

Already, as a result of the feedback, the workgroup is developing a PowerPoint presentation that will include guidelines on gathering the information and on using the survey results for hiring justification. (Stay tuned to the *Update*.) **U**

ONLINE Do you have additional comments or suggestions for improving UNOS' staffing survey? Send an e-mail to Angel Carroll at angel.carroll@unos.org or Jude Maghirang at jude.maghirang@unos.org.

All transplant administrators have access to the staffing survey at the UNOS Secure EnterpriseSM website, <https://portal.unos.org/index.aspx>. Go to the transplant administrators icon, navigate to staffing survey and select create new survey.

For more about TMF, including the agenda, visit unos.org (donation and transplantation > professional education) or visit the member archive at <http://communication.unos.org> (in upper right-hand corner, enter “TMF” in search box).

Karen Sokohl is UNOS' member communications specialist and a contributing writer.



ABOVE: Nearly 40 attendees participated in the feedback session on UNOS' annual staffing survey. One of the participants (bottom photo) was Ian Jamieson, chief administrative officer, solid organ transplant center, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics.