

October 16, 2023

The Honorable Xavier Beccera
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Beccera:

The United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) thanks you for providing the public with an opportunity to comment on the *Discrimination on the Basis of Disability in Health and Human Service Programs or Activities Proposed Rule (RIN 0945-AA15)*. The proposal upholds our shared values of inclusion and accessibility and ensures that every person receives an equal standard of care, regardless of their disability.

As the mission-driven non-profit which serves as the nation's transplant system under contract with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), we place tremendous value in ensuring that every person has equitable access to organ transplants. While great strides have been made in reducing barriers to access and discrimination against individuals with disabilities in need of an organ transplant, there is more work to be done to strengthen protections. Certain states have passed legislation protecting the rights of people with disabilities to access organ transplantation; however, UNOS believes that a federal standard is the best way to ensure consistent enforcement of those protections¹. UNOS supports HHS's recognition of the importance of including organ transplants in requirements set forth by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The proposed rule demonstrates our shared commitment to saving as many lives as possible through organ donation and transplant. It is essential that we continue to combat discriminatory practices so that more people may receive the gift of lifesaving organ transplants.

Thank you again for your efforts to advance equity and strengthen protections for people with disabilities who need a lifesaving organ transplant.

Sincerely,



Maureen McBride, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer, United Network for Organ Sharing

¹ Nat'l Down Syndrome Soc'y, *Nondiscrimination in Organ Transplantation Laws & Toolkit* (2022), <https://www.ndss.org/programs/ndss-legislative-agenda/healthcare-research/nondiscrimination-in-organ-transplantation-laws-toolkit/>.