



ISHLT

A Society that Includes Basic Science, the Failing Heart, & Advanced Lung Disease

ISHLT Response to OPTN Standardize Six-Minute Walk for Lung Allocation

The International Society for Heart and Lung Transplantation (ISHLT) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the policy proposal “Standardize Six-Minute Walk for Lung Allocation.” This proposal aims to standardize the six-minute walk distance (6MWT) by requiring an oxygen titration test before the 6MWT. This will establish a patient's oxygen needs so that the test is performed on the amount of oxygen the patient requires to be ambulatory. We offer several comments for consideration before implementation:

1. Although the policy will improve data quality and equity amongst programs, it will lead to an increased burden on both patients and programs. In particular, patients who live far from the transplant center may require multiple visits to perform the titration test and the 6MWT because providers may not feel comfortable having the patient do serial 6MWTs in one day.
2. It is not standardized where the oxygen titration test should occur. Some patients live at elevation but are being seen for transplant at sea level. As such, it may be beneficial to include more guidance on where the titration test should be performed.

Performing the titration test in the setting the patient resides in is more reflective of their illness burden, however, this may impact some data quality. Further, these locations may have limited health care providers, thus, this policy may be challenging to implement if the patient lives in resource-poor settings.

3. The proposal might benefit from more guidance on how this policy would be put in place for patients who are rapidly evaluated for transplant in the inpatient setting. Will multiple walk tests be required in the inpatient setting?
4. Most programs should be able to implement this by September 5, 2024, but some hospitals do not routinely perform oxygen titration testing or do not have bandwidth to perform more oxygen titration tests. As such, some programs may require more time to establish a process for oxygen titration. One approach that could give more time is to start optional collection of the titration test data on September 5, 2024, and mandate collection by March 5, 2025.
5. We would not recommend a prescribed time frame for repeating the titration test. One approach that may limit some of the burden is to only require repeat oxygen titration tests if oxygen needs at rest have changed.

ISHLT Level of Support: Support the Policy