



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

July 10, 2023

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley  
Committee on Finance  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Grassley:

I am writing to provide you with an update on the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) efforts to improve the National Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN).

In February of last year, I convened a cross-functional team within OMB to look into the OPTN and work with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on improvements. First, we spoke with HHS and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to better understand the challenges they were facing in overseeing the OPTN, and what steps they had already taken to improve the functionality and security of the OPTN system. We also spoke with the HHS Office of the Inspector General to understand the audit and oversight work they have undertaken, and their understanding of the challenges faced by HHS and HRSA. Finally, we worked collaboratively with HHS to determine appropriate measures to protect the OPTN from cyber threats and any unplanned interruption in service.

As a result of our collaborative efforts, HRSA has formally engaged the United States Digital Service (USDS) to leverage their expertise in technology, human-centered design, and modular contracting to advise in defining a path forward for iterative and competitive OPTN technology modernization. The HHS Chief Information Officer (CIO) also has taken several actions to support HRSA and its CIO in their efforts to improve the performance and security of the OPTN system, provide better oversight of the program, and ensure that the Federal Government has access to the OPTN system and data when needed. These actions include:

- Advising HRSA on the appropriate level of access that Federal officials need to the OPTN system to ensure that the system meets Federal security standards; specifically, HRSA requires the ability to access the production OPTN system in order to conduct log reviews;
- Working with HRSA to help ensure the OPTN complies with Department of Homeland Security (DHS) directives regarding High Value Assets;
- Ensuring that an external team conducts annual penetration tests on the OPTN systems directly, with appropriate controls to avoid a service disruption;
- Conferring with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to ensure that the protections provided by the HRSA firewall solution are effective and commensurate with other solutions sanctioned by CISA; and

- Supporting HRSA in the development of a strategy to modernize the availability of the OPTN system, which includes increased reliance on public cloud service providers.

The work of OMB's cross-functional team with HHS and HRSA culminated in the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Budget Proposal, which requested an additional \$36 million over the FY 2023 enacted amount to advance the technology enablement of OPTN operations. If the FY 2024 Budget request is approved by Congress, the funding will enable critical improvements to the oversight, transparency, accountability, and efficiency of the organ transplantation system. Specifically, the budget request will support two initiatives that would drive improvements in the OPTN system performance: Program Modernization Design and Modernization Strategy Implementation.

If Congress meets HRSA's funding request for FY 2024, the agency will be able to improve efforts to resolve the accountability and transparency issues of the OPTN and better allow the network to evolve as medical science, information technology, and patient needs change.<sup>1</sup> To be fully successful, legislative action is also required. Therefore, HRSA is requesting that Congress update the nearly 40-year-old National Organ Transplant Act, the statute that governs the OPTN. Additional details of this legislative proposal can be found in the FY 2024 HRSA Congressional Budget Justification.<sup>2</sup>

Thank you again for sharing your concerns on the OPTN. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact OMB's Office of Legislative Affairs at [OMBLegislativeAffairs@omb.eop.gov](mailto:OMBLegislativeAffairs@omb.eop.gov).

Sincerely,



Clare A. Martorana  
Federal Chief Information Officer

Identical Letter Sent to The Honorable Ron Wyden

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hrsa.gov/organ-procurement-transplantation-modernization>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/about/budget/budget-justification-fy2024.pdf> at 452