

Chairman John Joyce
Opening Statement - Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
“Ensuring Patient Safety: Oversight of the U.S. Organ Procurement
and Transplant System”
July 22, 2025

Good morning, and welcome to today’s hearing entitled “Ensuring Patient Safety: Oversight of the U.S. Organ Procurement and Transplant System.” I want to begin this hearing by saying that it is an honor to serve as Chairman of this Subcommittee and I look forward to working on a bipartisan basis to shed light on many areas in need of oversight and reform.

Just last year, more than 48,000 organ transplants were performed in the United States. Many of us know someone who is an organ donor or organ recipient. They might be relatives, neighbors, friends, or coworkers. These procedures are often lifesaving and can extend an individual’s life by years, if not decades. While organ transplants are a relief to so many families, there is another side of the story that is equally as important, that of the donors and their loved ones.

In September of last year, this Subcommittee held a hearing to conduct oversight of the organ transplant and procurement system, as

well as implementation of the “Securing the U.S. Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network Act,” which was signed into law in September 2023.

During that hearing, certain allegations came to light, raising concerns whether practices and procedures were putting patient safety at risk. Following this hearing, the Health Resources and Services Administration, or “HRSA,” directed the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network, or “O-P-T-N,” to investigate this issue to better understand what transpired in one of these alleged incidents.

HRSA also conducted its own investigation. The agency compiled a report that describes practices at the organ procurement organization (O-P-O)—formerly known as the Kentucky Organ Donor Affiliates (“KODA”)—but is now known as “Network for Hope.” The report also details the failures by the O-P-O and the O-P-T-N to adequately recognize and respond to poor patient care and quality practices. HRSA then issued a corrective action plan to the O-P-T-N, directing them to take specific actions to address the concerns identified in the reviews.

I ask unanimous consent to enter HRSA's report, dated March 24, 2025, and HRSA's corrective action plan dated May 28, 2025, into the hearing record. Without objection so ordered.

The report provides a detailed overview of HRSA's investigation, including about what is referred to as the "index case;" additional cases that HRSA reviewed; actions taken by the O-P-T-N, the O-P-T-N contractor (UNOS), and KODA; and, finally, KODA's organ procurement in recent years.

As part of its review of the cases beyond the index case, HRSA focused on "the overall medical presentation and initial and subsequent neurologic status of patients, staff interactions with patient families and primary medical teams, and evidence of robust documentation and quality assurance procedures." Lastly, the report includes an appendix consisting of O-P-T-N's findings following the HRSA-directed review.

For every doctor, the most important tenet in the patient-physician relationship is "above all, do no harm" but what happened in these cases fractured the physician-patient relationship and saw patients subjected to pain and suffering that never should have occurred. As Members of

Congress, we all swore an oath to protect the Constitutional right to life afforded to all Americans. These incidents cannot be allowed to stand without strict investigation and oversight in the spirit of this Constitutional oath.

The federal government plays a critical role in ensuring the organizations tasked with administering and overseeing our nation's organ procurement and transplant system operate safely, effectively, and in accordance with the law. Transparency is key to improving the system and repairing public trust. This Committee has, and will continue, to follow the facts so that we can restore trust and accountability within the system.

I want to thank the witnesses from both panels for joining us today. I look forward to hearing from each of you about the challenges facing the organ procurement and transplant system, the ways that the system can be improved, and how we can ensure the safety of *all* patients who elect to be organ donors.

I now recognize the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, Ms. Clarke, for her opening statement.