Introduction to Technology and Policy (ESD.10)
Fall 2001

Assignment #1 – Kidney Case

Assigned: September 10, 2001
Due: September 12, 2001

Background

Congratulations! You have just been named as a layperson/nonexpert member of the Organ Transplantation National Advisory Committee. The committee, which also includes ethicists, clergy, doctors, hospital administrators, and patient advocates, has been charged with reviewing national organ transplant policy and recommending changes.

In preparation for the first meeting, committee staff has provided you with two sets of materials: background information on kidney transplantation (handed out in class on September 12) and a set of ten patient histories (accessible on the Web at http://msl1.mit.edu/ESD10/kidneys).

Your assignment is to develop a system for allocating kidneys to patients, and to communicate that system in a short memo and a 5-minute class presentation. You should use only the information provided, as this is not a research project. You should assume that all candidates would be equally biocompatible with an available kidney.

Deliverables

You are required to turn in a short memo (max 2 pages), summarizing the following:

- The criteria/ranking system you favor
- How your ranking system uses the data from the patient histories
- Why you feel this system is best

You are also required to attach a table to your memo. The table should show how you apply the system to the patients and determine the order in which they would receive a kidney transplant.

Finally, you are required to prepare a single transparency. Students will be picked randomly and asked to present their ranking system to the class. The transparency should briefly explain your ranking system, and name the patient first in line to receive a kidney according to it.