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KIDNEY COMMUNITY UNITES TO URGE LAWMAKERS TO ADVANCE AND PROTECT KIDNEY HEALTH

16 kidney organizations champion legislation to increase research funding and reduce barriers to living kidney donation

Highlights

- The American Society of Nephrology (ASN) is one of 16 kidney health organizations participating in Kidney Community Advocacy Day 2015 in Washington, DC.
- More than 100 advocates will meet with Congressional offices to call for lawmakers' support of increased research funding to accelerate development of new therapies for kidney diseases.
- Kidney health providers and patients will also urge passage of legislation that eliminates barriers to living donation and helps increase access to lifesaving transplants.

More than 20 million Americans have kidney disease, the 9th leading cause of death in the U.S.

Washington, DC (September 10, 2015) — The American Society of Nephrology (ASN) is one of 16 kidney patient and health professional organizations joining together on Capitol Hill for Kidney Community Advocacy Day 2015. More than 100 advocates will meet with over 100 Congressional offices to advance legislation that increases kidney research funding and removes barriers to living kidney donation. Today, more than 20 million Americans have kidney disease, nearly 650,000 of whom have kidney failure (end-stage renal disease [ESRD]) and need a kidney transplant or dialysis to stay alive.

“The kidney community has come together to ensure patient voices are heard in Congress,” said ASN President Jonathan Himmelfarb, MD, FASN. “We’re committed to providing better care and treatments for patients with kidney disease. Congress can do that by bolstering kidney research investments and enacting legislation that promotes organ donations.”

Strengthening Kidney Research Funding for New Cures

Since 1972, the federal government has paid for most dialysis care, with less than 1% of Medicare patients accounting for nearly 7% of Medicare expenditures. The expense of

the Medicare ESRD Program is a significant incentive to increase research funding to develop innovative and more cost-efficient therapies to reduce the burden of kidney disease on patients and Medicare.

“Kidney disease affects more than 20 million Americans and costs Medicare \$80 billion annually, yet federal investments in kidney research are less than 1% of Medicare costs for patients with kidney disease,” said Frank C. Brosius III, MD, ASN Research Advocacy Committee Chair. “It doesn’t have to be this way. Congress can reduce the significant burden of kidney disease on patients and Medicare by bolstering investments in research and innovation.”

Removing Barriers to Living Kidney Donation

“Kidney transplants are the best treatment option for most patients with kidney failure, yet there aren’t enough donated kidneys for everyone who needs them,” said ASN Secretary-Treasurer and Policy Board Chair John R. Sedor, MD, FASN.

Every 14 minutes a patient is added to the kidney waitlist and 12 Americans die each day waiting for a transplant. Transplantation is also cost effective for Medicare, with annual costs of \$32,922 per transplant patient vs. \$87,845 per hemodialysis patient.

“More than 100,000 people are on the waiting list for a kidney transplant,” Dr. Sedor added. “Congress can help them by enacting commonsense legislation that promotes organ donations by ensuring insurance coverage and job security for donors.”

The forthcoming Living Donor Protection Act of 2015 would help to increase the number of kidney transplants by eliminating barriers to donation, including:

- Prohibiting insurers from denying or limiting coverage or from charging higher premiums to living organ donors
- Ensuring living organ donors can use “time off” protected by the Family and Medical Leave Act to recover from donation surgery and maintain job security

To learn more about Kidney Community Advocacy Day, please follow [#KidneyAdvocates](#) on Twitter and visit <http://www.asn-online.org/policy/hillday.aspx?year=2015>.

Kidney Community Advocacy Day 2015 Participating Organizations

- Alport Syndrome Foundation
- American Association of Kidney Patients
- American Kidney Fund
- American Nephrology Nurses Association
- American Society of Nephrology
- American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
- American Society of Transplant Surgeons
- American Society of Transplantation

- Home Dialyzors United
- IGA Nephropathy Foundation of America
- National Kidney Foundation
- National Renal Administrators Association
- NephCure Kidney International
- Oxalosis and Hyperoxaluria Foundation
- Polycystic Kidney Disease Foundation
- Society for Transplant Social Workers

EXPERTS AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT

ASN Secretary-Treasurer John R. Sedor, MD, FASN, and ASN Research Advocacy Committee Chair Frank C. Brosius III, MD, are available to discuss Kidney Community Advocacy Day. Please contact Kurtis Pivert at 202-699-0238 or kpivert@asn-online.org to arrange interviews.

Founded in 1966, and with more than 15,000 members, the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) leads the fight against kidney disease by educating health professionals, sharing new knowledge, advancing research, and advocating the highest quality care for patients.

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