

For Immediate Release

Contact: Christine Feheley, [cfeheley@asn-online.org](mailto:cfeheley@asn-online.org), 202-640-4638

## American Society of Nephrology Attending White House Organ Summit

**Washington, DC (June 13, 2016)** —More than 20 million Americans live with kidney diseases. About 650,000 have end-stage renal disease (ESRD) and need dialysis or a transplant to live. Kidney diseases disproportionately affects minority populations; African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans are four times more likely to develop kidney failure, and African Americans in low income neighborhoods are 57 percent less likely to make the transplant list.

In recognition of this crisis, the White House is convening an Organ Summit today to discuss care challenges and feature cutting-edge organ donor innovations and transplantation research. Raymond C. Harris, MD, FASN, President of the American Society of Nephrology (ASN), ASN Public Policy Board Chair John R. Sedor, MD, FASN; and ASN Transplant Advisory Group Chair Michelle A. Josephson, MD, are joining President Barack Obama and others in reaffirming their commitment to improve kidney patients' treatment options and access to transplantation.

With more than 450,000 Americans and millions of people around the world suffering from kidney failure who depend on dialysis to live, ASN is committed to finding a superior alternative that improves their lives and today announced its pledge of the first \$7 million dollars toward a possible XPRIZE competition to achieve that goal. Developed in partnership with the XPRIZE Foundation, the competition would incentivize the development of a novel wearable or implantable device that replaces kidney function and improves patient quality of life.

The Medicare program entitles every American suffering from kidney failure—regardless of age—to lifesaving dialysis at a cost of nearly \$35 billion annually, more than the National Institutes of Health's total budget. Despite this commitment to care for patients with kidney diseases, little innovation in the field of kidney treatment has occurred for decades. ASN believes a prize competition has the power to catalyze the radical degree of change patients deserve and ignite the science that is poised to develop life-changing solutions.

"With more than 450,000 Americans depending on dialysis to survive, patients and taxpayers deserve better," Harris said.

Transplantation is the best treatment for those with failing kidneys. Unfortunately, with approximately 100,000 people on the kidney waiting list and too few organs available, many patients die waiting for their name to be called.

Press Release

In addition to pledging the first \$7 million for the kidney disease XPRIZE, ASN also announced at today's summit the Kidney Innovation Initiative—a partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that challenges innovators worldwide to compete in developing technology resources that improve quality of life and outcomes for people with kidney diseases and those anticipating a kidney transplant.

"The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a long and important history in transplant surgery, having performed the first successful liver transplants in 1968 along with developing techniques for suppressing the body's natural attempt to reject transplanted tissue," said VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. David J. Shulkin. "With more than one million Veterans suffering from kidney disease, this Summit is critically important. The VA is pleased to partner with organizations like the American Society of Nephrology on groundbreaking research and technologies aimed at improving the quality of life and outcomes for our nation's Veterans. That work, we are certain, will have a lasting impact ultimately for all Americans with kidney disease or where kidney transplantation is imminent."

"This challenge will produce tools for Veterans as well as the more than 20 million other Americans affected by kidney diseases," Harris said, adding that ASN asks others to join the society in revolutionizing kidney care options.

"With the best minds working together, we can make giant strides in the fight against kidney diseases."

Since 1966, the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) has been leading the fight to prevent, treat, and cure kidney diseases throughout the world by educating health professionals and scientists, advancing research and innovation, communicating new knowledge, and advocating for the highest quality care for patients. ASN has nearly 16,000 members representing 112 countries. For more information, please visit [www ASN-online.org](http://www ASN-online.org) or contact us at 202-640-4660.

#