

Introductory/Meeting Kickoff Talking Points

Key Takeaways

1. Recognize that kidney research investments are critically needed, but currently underfunded, and urge Congress to strike a budget deal that allows the House and Senate Appropriations Committees' recommended NIH funding increases to be put into law.
2. Co-sponsor the Living Donor Act of 2015, which will help increase access to transplantation by eliminating barriers to living donation.
3. Understand that many kidney organizations representing the nation's kidney patients and health professionals are participating in this joint advocacy day to raise awareness regarding kidney research and support increased access to transplantation.

1. Introductions

- *Introduce yourself (noting if you are a constituent); (Ex: My name is Jane Doe, and I'm a kidney physician who also teaches and conducts kidney research at the University of Wyoming / My name is John Doe, and I'm a kidney patient who lives in your district in Hawaii.)*
- *Explain your role with your organization (Ex: I am the a member of the American Society of Nephrology Research Advocacy Committee / I am a member of Kidney Patient Organization X)*
- *Introduce your organization and its mission (Ex: ASN is the largest kidney organization in the world, with nearly 15,000 members dedicated to treating and curing patients with all types of kidney disease. / Ex: Kidney Patient Organization X is dedicated to raising awareness about kidney disease)*
- Thank you for meeting with us today. We really appreciate your time and interest. Our organizations are one of the many kidney organizations representing the nation's kidney patients and health professionals in this joint advocacy day.
- Our organizations have rallied around two issues of mutual importance to patients and health professionals. First, we'll be talking about the need for greater investment in kidney research and second, we're asking for your support for a bill to increase access of kidney patients to transplantation.

2. Provide an overview of kidney disease in the United States (take out state-specific fact sheet)

- More than 20 million Americans have kidney disease, which often progresses to kidney failure or death. The causes of kidney disease are broad and varied and include diabetes, hypertension, and genetic origins. But when the kidney fails, the only treatment options are dialysis and transplantation
- *If you are a patient advocate, this would be an ideal point to discuss your personal experience with kidney disease/your story*

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- In 1972, Congress passed a law guaranteeing treatment for *every* American with kidney failure through the Medicare End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Program.
- It is the *only* Medicare program that, *by law*, requires coverage for patients with a specific health condition *regardless* of age or disability.
- As you can see from our fact sheet, kidney disease affects many people in your home state, and the ESRD Program is an important, life sustaining—but very costly—program. **(point to cost of care statistics on fact sheet)**
- We are committed to preventing progression of kidney disease to kidney failure or death while improving the lives of people with kidney disease, and the two issues we're discussing today are significant steps to that goal.

Transition to first message: Research funding (see research talking points) [Take out fact sheet on medical research].