

TALKING POINTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SIX-MINUTE CONGRESSIONAL MEETING

Key Takeaways

1. Kidney disease is prevalent and expensive.
2. Medical research benefits patients and the economy.
3. Besides limiting our ability to improve patient care, budget cuts are hurting researchers, businesses, and the U.S. economy.
4. Congress should help kidney disease patients by providing additional funding for NIH, especially the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, in 2014.

Detail

1. **Introduction** [Give them one of your business cards and a copy of the handouts.]
 - Thank you for the opportunity to meet.
 - [In one sentence, describe your work as a physician or researcher.]
 - I'm also a member of the American Society of Nephrology, which is committed to curing kidney disease.
 - Today I am here to ask you to help kidney disease patients by increasing funding for NIH, especially the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, in 2014.
 - Please stop me at any point if you have questions or comments.
2. **Discuss the public health burden of kidney disease and importance of kidney research** [hold up your Kidney Disease by the Numbers handout]
 - More than 20 million Americans have kidney disease, and it is the 8th leading cause of death in the United States today. In our state there are XXX,XXX patients with kidney disease.
 - Patients whose kidneys fail require dialysis or a kidney transplant to stay alive, and Medicare pays for everyone with kidney failure regardless of age.
 - There are more than 600,000 patients with kidney failure today. Although they represent less than 1% of Medicare beneficiaries, they account for nearly 7% of Medicare's budget.
 - Consequently, advances in kidney research that can halt or slow progression to kidney failure—or make dialysis more efficient—can yield significant savings to Medicare.
3. **Review the economic benefits of kidney research** [hold up your Investment in NIH Research handout]
 - Medical research is one of the smartest investments government can make.
 - More than 80% of NIH funding flows back to states and local communities.
 - Every dollar spent on research generates \$2.60 in economic activity.
 - One in 500 U.S. full-time jobs is supported by research.

4. Discuss the consequences of budget cuts in 2014 and beyond [hold up your Testimonials on the Impact of Budget Cuts handout]

- In 2013, the budget for NIH was slashed more than 5%.
- As a consequence, NIH awarded nearly 1,000 fewer grants.
- Adjusted for inflation, NIH's budget is less today than what it was in 2003, and the percentage of grants NIH funds is at an all-time record low.
- Researchers have had to scale back operations, cut jobs, and in some cases close laboratories.
- Businesses that support them have also taken a hit.
- The last handout includes testimonials on the impact budget cuts are having.
- Would it be helpful to share with you the effect of cuts on my work?

5. Wrap up

- Please ensure patients receive the care they need and help preserve America's preeminence in medical research by providing additional funding for NIH, especially the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, in 2014.
- Thank you again for taking the time to meet with me.
- Before leaving, can I get a picture with you? [If they say yes, please email your picture(s) to golan@asn-online.org.]