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ASN Stands Against Unethical Transplantation Practices

ASN endorses the Declaration of Istanbul

Washington, DC (Friday, August 8, 2008) — The American Society of Nephrology (ASN) endorses The Declaration of Istanbul on Organ Trafficking and Transplant Tourism. Demonstrating the Society's commitment to fighting transplant commercialism, transplant tourism, and organ trafficking, ASN stands with The Transplantation Society, the International Society of Nephrology, and other organizations in support of this important document.

ASN representatives convened with delegates from over 150 scientific and medical bodies from around the world, as well as government officials, social scientists, and ethicists, in Istanbul, Turkey, in spring 2008. Unethical practices related to transplantation include organ trafficking (the illicit sale of human organs), transplant commercialism (when an organ is treated as a commodity), and transplant tourism (when organs given to patients from outside a country undermine the country's ability to provide organs for its own population).

The Declaration of Istanbul, available on the ASN Patient Care Website, states that because unethical practices are an undesirable consequence of the global shortage of organs for transplantation, each country should implement programs to prevent organ failure and should provide organs to meet the transplant needs of its residents from donors within its own population. Participants in the Istanbul Summit urge transplant professionals to put an end to these activities and to foster safe and ethical practices for both transplant recipients and donors. The therapeutic potential of deceased organ donation should also be maximized.

The Declaration outlines a number of steps that can help increase deceased organ donation and ensure the protection and safety of living donors. It will be submitted to professional organizations and to the health authorities of all countries for consideration. "The legacy of transplantation must not be the impoverished victims of organ trafficking and transplant tourism but rather a celebration of the gift of health by one individual to another," the Declaration states.

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