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November 11-13: ASN Management Office, San Diego Convention Center, Room 14, (619) 525-6307
Friday, Nov. 14 – Monday, Nov. 17, 2003: ASN Media Room,
San Diego Convention Center, Room 13, (619) 525-6301 (media room), 240-381-7513 (after hours)

DEBATE ON PAYMENTS TO POTENTIAL KIDNEY DONORS: YES OR NO?

Pressure to Increase Donations Prompts Discussion Among Transplant Experts

San Diego, CA (Nov. 16, 2003) — The overwhelming need to search for new options to increase the stagnant donor pool is prompting a lively debate on the medical and ethical issues surrounding payments for kidney donations. Some argue that paid donations would expand the donor pool and benefit both donor and recipient, while others emphasize ethical concerns involved in payment to donors, including donor motivation and the potential health risks to paid donors.

Medical professionals will be presenting the pros and cons of paid donations at the clinical nephrology conference (CNC), “Debates in Renal Failure: Payments to Potential Donors Should be Used to Increase the Transplant Pool: Yes or No?” at the American Society of Nephrology’s (ASN) 36th Annual Meeting and Scientific Exposition on Sunday, November 16 in San Diego, California.

“This debate is timely, due to the increase in patients waiting for kidneys, the success of kidney transplantations from non-related live donors, and the low supply of kidneys from all sources,” says William Bennett, MD, who will be presenting highlights of this CNC at a transplantation news briefing from 12:15 – 1:15 p.m. on Friday, November 14 in Room 12 of the San Diego Convention Center.

The demand for kidney transplantations is skyrocketing, due to the increasing number of Americans diagnosed with renal failure due to type 2 diabetes and hypertension. Unfortunately, the demand for kidney transplants is vastly greater than the number of kidney donors. According to UNOS, there are currently over 56,000 people on the national waiting list to receive a kidney from a deceased donor. In contrast, there were approximately 6,200 living and 8,500 deceased kidneys transplanted in the United States in 2002.

The “Debates in Renal Failure” clinical nephrology conference will take place from 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. on Sunday, November 16 in Room 6 AB of the San Diego Convention Center. Session attendees will be able to express their opinion on these controversial issues through a special electronic audience response system that instantly tallies up to 1,000 responses during the session. Questions will be asked at the beginning of the session and again at the conclusion to see if the debate swayed opinion. Questions will include: Do you favor financial incentives for donor families who consent to deceased donor transplantation? For live donor transplantation, should the donor be compensated financially?

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As the largest nephrology meeting of its kind, Renal Week 2003 is expected to draw more than 11,000 nephrologists to reveal the latest findings in renal research and in the care of patients with kidney and related disorders. The ASN is a not-for-profit organization of 9,000 physicians and scientists dedicated to the study and practice of nephrology and committed to providing a forum for discussion about the latest research and clinical findings on kidney diseases.

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