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AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NEPHROLOGY–GWU REPORT OUTLINES TRENDS AFFECTING CURRENT, FUTURE KIDNEY HEALTH WORKFORCE

ASN collaborating with GWU researchers to analyze all aspects of the nephrology workforce

Highlights

- The American Society of Nephrology (ASN), the world's largest organization of kidney health professionals, has released a new analysis of the US nephrology workforce authored by leading health workforce researchers at George Washington University.
- The study—*The US Nephrology Workforce: Developments and Trends*—outlines several challenges for the specialty, including a declining interest in nephrology careers among medical students and residents.

More than 20 million Americans have kidney disease, the 9th leading cause of death in the U.S.

Washington, DC (November 3, 2014) — The American Society of Nephrology (ASN) has published a new report analyzing trends and factors influencing the current US nephrology workforce. Authored by leading health workforce researchers from George Washington University (GWU), the report outlines several challenges for the specialty, notably a declining interest in nephrology careers among medical students and residents and an uncertain job market for recent graduates. The study—*The US Nephrology Workforce: Developments and Trends*—is available online at ASN's website <http://www.asn-online.org/workforce>.

The report and the ongoing analysis of the nephrology workforce is part of ASN's broad initiative to increase interest in nephrology careers. "ASN is committed to the current and future generation of nephrologists," said ASN President Sharon M. Moe. "With the increasing prevalence and incidence of chronic kidney disease and end stage renal disease, a robust kidney health workforce will be critical to ensuring patients receive the specialized care they need."

Leading GWU investigators are collaborating with ASN, including Ed Salsberg, MPA—an expert in the field of health workforce research and formerly of Center for Health Workforce Studies, Association of American Medical Colleges, and Health Resources and Services Administration—and Leah Masselink, PhD.

“This study and others planned for the coming years, are intended to provide data and information to help guide the nephrology community through this period of transformation in both the kidney care and the health care delivery system, said Salsberg. “Assuring an adequate supply and distribution requires data and information. Only through these types of studies and ongoing monitoring of the workforce will the nephrology community be able to develop programs and policies to better assure access to high-quality kidney care for all Americans.”

The first of several reports to be released, *The US Nephrology Workforce: Developments and Trends* provides an overview of the nephrology workforce and factors influencing supply, demand, and use, to begin to answer three important workforce questions: 1) Will the United States have an adequate supply of nephrologists to assure access to needed care? 2) Will nephrology be able to continue to attract highly qualified applicants? 3) Will nephrology continue to produce investigators, particularly physician-scientists?

Among the findings outlined in the report:

- The number of nephrology fellowship positions has increased over the past few decades, which will lead to substantial future increases in supply.
- Fewer US medical graduates are selecting nephrology careers.
- A survey conducted for the study indicates the current job market for new nephrologists is limited, especially for international medical graduates.
- More women are choosing careers in nephrology.
- The number of applicants to nephrology through the National Residency Match Program’s (NRMP’s) Medical Specialties Matching Program (MSMP) is decreasing.
- The demand for care related to kidney disease and injury is increasing.
- The patient care delivery system for kidney disease and injury is evolving with pressure to constrain growth in expenditures.

“The decreasing number of US medical school graduates selecting nephrology is a warning signal for the specialty. Monitoring and assessing the impact of the major forces impacting the specialty and responding to these developments is necessary for a vibrant specialty,” said Salsberg. The next GWU report, to be released in December 2014, will focus on nephrology fellows and trainees and the future generation of nephrologists.

In addition to working with GWU to produce high-quality analyses of the workforce, ASN has developed a broad, multifaceted approach to increase interest in nephrology careers. These include initiatives to provide students with a positive introduction to the specialty, such as the ASN Kidney STARS (Students And Residents) program to help students and residents experience the ASN Kidney Week or Kidney TREKS (Ttored Research and Education for Kidney Scholars), which engages students in kidney physiology and provides mentoring opportunities. Other initiatives address expanding diversity and

inclusion programs for kidney professionals and defending federal funding for medical education.

Embargoed Report Available Upon Request—Contact ASN Content and Media Analyst Kurtis Pivert at 202.699.0238 or kpivert@asn-online.org.

Founded in 1966, and with more than 15,000 members, the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) leads the fight against kidney disease by educating health professionals, sharing new knowledge, advancing research, and advocating the highest quality care for patients.

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