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The American Society of Nephrology (ASN) Applauds Congress and President Barack H. Obama for Passage and Signing into Law the 21st Century Cures Act

Washington, DC (December 13, 2016) – The American Society of Nephrology (ASN) applauds Congress and President Barack H. Obama for passage and signing into law the [21st Century Cures Act](#) today. ASN advocated for specific provisions of the new law to benefit the more than 20 million Americans afflicted with kidney diseases and the 650,000 with kidney failure who rely on a kidney transplant or dialysis to live.

“The 21st Century Cures Act takes dramatic new steps to encourage research and innovation that could benefit the millions of Americans suffering from chronic diseases, including kidney diseases,” said ASN President Raymond C. Harris, MD, FASN.

The new law calls on the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to support prize competitions to improve patients’ health in fields where there is a significant disease burden or that current investment is disproportionately small relative to federal expenditures on that condition. The Medicare program entitles every American suffering from kidney failure—regardless of age—to lifesaving dialysis at a cost of nearly \$35 billion annually, more than NIH’s total budget.

“ASN is heartened by this commitment to using the power of prize competitions to foster innovation on behalf of the patients most in need. Last year, the society announced its pledge of the first \$7 million dollars toward a prize competition to develop a novel wearable or implantable device that replaces kidney function and improves patient quality of life,” Harris said. “As ASN seeks a partner to launch the prize competition in 2017, I anticipate we will continue close dialogue with NIH and other federal agencies whose expertise and collaboration would be invaluable in making this important endeavor a success.”

ASN applauded the leadership of House Energy and Commerce Chair Fred Upton (R-MI-6th) and Representative Diane DeGette (D-CO-6th), who shepherded the legislation through the House and Senate HELP Committee Chair Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA). “There would be no announcement today without their vision and tireless efforts,” Harris commented.

In addition to advocating for prize competitions, ASN encouraged other provisions, including:

- 1) Permitting patients with kidney failure to enroll in Medicare Advantage Previously, kidney failure was the only pre-existing condition preventing patients from enrolling in Medicare Advantage. This change creates patient choice to selecting a plan that best fits their needs.

- 2) Using patient preferences in decision making by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The new law clarifies that patients' own experiences will be incorporated into the FDA decision making for medical products.
- 3) Increasing funding for NIH research and innovation. The Act bolsters funding for research and innovation that lags behind the costs of caring for patients suffering from chronic diseases.

Since 1966, the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) has been leading the fight to prevent, treat, and cure kidney diseases throughout the world by educating health professionals and scientists, advancing research and innovation, communicating new knowledge, and advocating for the highest quality care for patients. ASN has more than 16,000 members representing 112 countries. For more information, please visit www.asn-online.org or contact us at 202-640-4660.

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