

CONTACT: Christine Feheley • cfeheley@asn-online.org • (202) 640-4638

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ASN, Kidney Health Organizations Ask Congress to Increase Investment in Kidney Disease Research, Support Innovations in Kidney Medicine

Washington, DC (September 27, 2018) – The prevalence of kidney diseases in the United States is at a record high. As such, members of “kidney community” healthcare groups, including the American Society of Nephrology (ASN), will meet with Congress on Capitol Hill to commend them for a \$2 billion funding increase for the NIH with an at least proportional increase for the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), and advocate for increased innovation in kidney medicine, including the Kidney Innovation Accelerator (KidneyX), and passage of the Living Donor Protection Act of 2017 (H.R. 1270).

In 2017, the GAO highlighted the government’s unique role in the care of kidney failure patients, when in 1972, Congress committed to treating all Americans with kidney failure through the Medicare End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Program—the only Medicare program that provides coverage for patients with a specific health condition regardless of age.

The GAO report also notes that while Medicare spends nearly \$33 billion on kidney failure, the investment in federally funded kidney research is the equivalent of about 1 percent of that. *United States Renal Data System (USRDS)* data places total Medicare spending for all kidney diseases at \$103 billion.

Research Funding

“On behalf of the 40 million Americans living with kidney diseases, we thank Congress for recognizing the significant burden kidney diseases place on all Americans, and for increasing investment in kidney research at the NIH,” said Crystal A. Gadegbeku, MD, chair of the ASN Policy and Advocacy Committee.”

Press Release

“Sustained investment in medical research, like the ground-breaking Kidney Precision Medicine Project, is crucial for the development of new therapies and treatments for kidney diseases. We deeply appreciate the historical Congressional NIH support that has brought us to the current state of kidney care and are excited about new avenues of investment to accelerate cutting-edge science toward better treatments and even cures.”

Innovation in Kidney Medicine

“In the past decades, we have seen too few new therapies become available that improve the lives of the millions of Americans affected by kidney diseases,” Gadegbeku added. “We need Congress to support public-private partnerships efforts to accelerate innovations for people with kidney diseases, like KidneyX.”

The Kidney Innovation Accelerator (KidneyX), is a new public-private partnership led by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHS) to seed, incent, decrease risk, and accelerate development of biologics, devices, drugs, and other therapies across the spectrum of kidney care. KidneyX will conduct a series of prize competitions to foster innovation in areas of unmet patient need, starting with a focus on developing next-generation dialysis technologies.

Saving Lives with Living Donor Transplants

Each day, 13 Americans die on the 100,000-person kidney transplant wait list. On Kidney Community Advocacy Day, organizations will push Congress to pass the Living Donor Protection Act of 2017, no-cost legislation to remove barriers to living organ donation and increase access to life-saving kidney transplants.

Sponsored by U.S. Reps. Jaime Herrera Beutler, R-WA, and Jerry Nadler, D-NY, with Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-NY, the legislation protects living donors by ensuring insurance companies do not deny or limit coverage or raise premiums. It also clarifies that living organ donors can take Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) time to recover from donation surgery and maintain job security.

ASN and the other organizations are calling on Congress to enact this important legislation to protect those who give the gift of life.

About the American Society of Nephrology

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 20,000 members representing 124 countries. For more information, please visit www.asn-online.org or contact us at 202-640-4660.

2018 Kidney Community Advocacy Day participants:

**Alport Syndrome Foundation
American Association of Kidney Patients
American Kidney Fund
American Nephrology Nurses Association
American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
American Society of Transplant Surgeons
Home Dialyzors United
IGA Nephropathy Foundation of America
National Kidney Foundation
NephCure Kidney International
Polycystic Kidney Disease Foundation
Renal Physicians Association**

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