



# PRESS RELEASE

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## Advocates from ASN Urges Congress to Change the Status Quo in Kidney Health

### Highlights

- *More than 37 million Americans live with kidney diseases.*
- *800,000 Americans have kidney failure, a condition for which there is no cure.*
- *Kidney diseases disproportionately affect communities of color.*
- *COVID-19, especially deadly for people with kidney diseases, has highlighted the urgent need for change.*

**Washington, DC (April 14, 2021)** — Today, patients and health professionals representing the American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP) and American Society of Nephrology (ASN) will urge their Congressional delegation to increase investment in kidney research and innovation.

### Why are ASN representatives meeting with Congress?

Kidney diseases represent a major public health threat, one that has been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Disparities in kidney health disproportionately affect minorities across the US. For instance, Black Americans comprise 13% of the US population, but 33% of Americans receiving dialysis.

COVID-19 damages the kidneys of up to 50% of all people hospitalized for COVID infection.

### What needs to change?

Congress must invest in research and support the innovation needed to improve health outcomes and care for Americans with kidney diseases, address disparities in kidney health, and mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and future crises.

Congress must increase kidney research funding at the National Institute of Diabetes, Digestive, and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), and accelerate innovation for kidney patients – including the development of the world’s first artificial kidney – by funding KidneyX.

**1) ASN urges Congress to increase investment in KidneyX to \$25 million in FY22**

[KidneyX](#), a major HHS/ASN partnership with extensive bipartisan support, has already funded 50 inventors and innovators whose solutions are solving complex challenges for kidney patients. Projects awarded prize money to date range from implantable kidney filtration devices and state-of-the-art nanomaterials to pandemic prevention kits for kidney patients.

KidneyX has made a long-term commitment to transforming options for people with kidney failure through the Artificial Kidney Prize. 850 million people worldwide live with kidney diseases, and KidneyX is leading the global effort to develop the world’s first artificial kidney. The innovation will transform the lives of those who currently cannot live without dialysis, a life-saving but life-limiting procedure.

**2) NIDDK research is vital to improving kidney health and funding must be increased.**

Research that will improve kidney health cannot occur without adequate funding. [NIDDK](#) grants fund the majority of kidney research in the US and enable researchers to study – and address -- the long-term impact of health disparities, the devastating short-and long-term effects of COVID-19, and build desperately needed improvements to care. This research ultimately benefits all Americans, improving health outcomes and reducing costs. Medicare alone spends more than \$130 billion annually managing kidney diseases.

To date, Congress has not provided emergency funding to NIDDK for COVID-19 research, forcing the support of this critical science to come at the expense of existing research projects. Congress must increase its investment in kidney health research by providing funding for NIDDK that keeps pace with inflation, allows for new kidney research, and provides dedicated funding for COVID-19 research.

**About the American Society of Nephrology**

[ASN](#) leads 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 21,000 members representing 131 countries. For more information, please visit [www.asn-online.org](http://www.asn-online.org) or contact the society at 202-640-4660.*

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