



# PRESS RELEASE

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## AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NEPHROLOGY STRONGLY SUPPORTS CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT OF TRANSPLANT SYSTEM

**Washington, DC (August 3, 2022)** — The American Society of Nephrology (ASN) supports efforts by Congress to improve the US transplant system. Today, the Senate Finance Committee will conduct an oversight hearing, *A System in Need of Repair: Addressing Organizational Failures of the U.S.'s Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network* (OPTN). ASN welcomes the Senate Finance Committee's attention to this urgent and essential area of need and calls for the modernization of the OPTN contract to increase technology performance, security, and transparency and accountability.

"ASN believes a strong and equitable transplant system is essential to meet the needs of the more than 800,000 Americans living with kidney failure. While a kidney transplant is the optimal therapy for most people living with kidney failure, it remains out of reach for too many people," said ASN President -Elect Michelle A. Josephson, MD, FASN. "ASN is deeply concerned with reports of technology failures from the OPTN contractor that are contributing to the immense organ discard rate and shortage of kidneys for transplantation. ASN reaffirms our call for the OPTN contract to be modernized."

ASN has long-championed modernization of the OPTN contract among numerous other transplant system reforms. A recent investigation by the Washington Post revealed that a branch of the White House, the U.S. Digital Service, has raised numerous concerns with the technology infrastructure established by the current OPTN contractor. Citing the use of outdated technology, resistance to government oversight, and electronic security vulnerabilities, the U.S. Digital Service recommended the government "break up the current monopoly" of the current OPTN contractor by splitting and modernizing portions of the current contract.

Currently, there are nearly 90,000 people waiting to receive a kidney and on average 13 people die every day while waiting for a kidney transplant. Furthermore, Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Indigenous Americans, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders wait more than two years longer on average to receive a kidney than White Americans. Although the US conducted more than 41,000 transplants in 2021, there is room for improvement. Analyses have shown more than 20% of donated organs

are discarded, a rate twice as high as that for France, the UK, and Germany, and studies suggest the increased rate of donation is linked with US health crises such as the opioid and gun death epidemics.

“The more than 21,000 kidney health professionals who comprise ASN are committed to creating a world without kidney diseases, including by transforming transplant care,” continued Dr. Josephson. “ASN commends the Senate Finance Committee for continuing to drive improvements in transplantation and stands in partnership to ensure all Americans who could benefit have access to this critical therapy.” ASN is leading numerous initiatives and recommendations to transform access to transplantation. Legislation supported by ASN such as the Living Donor Protection Act promises to make living donation more feasible, and ASN has urged the federal government to increase organ availability and equity in transplant by modernizing the OPTN contract, improving transparency and accountability of the transplant system, and elevating patients as partners in care.

A recent [article](#) in *Kidney News Online*, details additional advocacy efforts.

### **About ASN**

*Since 1966, 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 132 countries. For more information, visit [www.asn-online.org](http://www.asn-online.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).*

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