Dear Colleagues:

As Councilors of the American Society of Nephrology (ASN), we are dismayed by the results of this week’s National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) Specialties Matching Service (SMS) in nephrology. As Division Chiefs, Training Program Directors, and educators, our disappointment with this year’s outcome is personal and professional. This week’s Match extends a 5-year streak of a decreasing number of residents choosing nephrology careers and programs participating in the Match, and an increasing number of nephrology fellowship positions going unfilled. It is clear that the recent email traffic on the listservs for the ASN Training Program Directors and Division Chiefs reflect a similar high degree of concern for the future of our specialty.

To address this situation, the ASN Council plans to form a Nephrology Match Task Force. This Task Force will be comprised of Councilors, Nephrology Fellowship Training Program Directors, Division Chiefs, members of the ASN Workforce Committee, and other key leaders and stakeholders. The Nephrology Match Task Force will work quickly to assess the future viability of the Match, identify ways to ensure the integrity of the Match, and attempt to clarify the ideal number of offered fellowship positions (based on recent estimates of the demand for nephrologists throughout the United States).

Committed to nephrology’s future, ASN since 2010 has dedicated significant time, effort, and resources to increasing interest in nephrology careers among students and residents. To learn more about this commitment and the signature initiatives, such as Kidney STARS and Kidney TREKS, please visit http://www.asn-online.org/workforce/.

We believe that the efforts of ASN, as well as individual and programmatic efforts within academic institutions and nephrology practices, will ultimately increase interest in nephrology careers. However, we also recognize that it will take time to assess the impact of these efforts, overcome the many factors contributing to the negative perception of nephrology careers, and rise above the challenges highlighted by this week’s Match.

Nephrology is at a crossroad. ASN is committed to work with the community to inspire the next generation, reestablish nephrology’s leadership role, and find new ways to prevent, treat, and ultimately cure kidney disease.

Together, each of us must represent the very best of our specialty.

Sincerely,

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