



August 1, 2025

Jayanta Bhattacharya, MD, PhD
Director
National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Dr. Bhattacharya:

On behalf of the American Society of Nephrology (ASN), thank you for your ongoing leadership and commitment to advancing biomedical research as Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Representing more than 21,000 physicians, scientists, and other kidney care professionals dedicated to improving the nation's kidney health, ASN appreciates NIH's essential role in supporting the discovery and innovation that drive progress for people with kidney diseases.

ASN is writing to express its strong opposition to the recently implemented NIH policy limiting competing grant renewals and its unintended impact on the kidney research community, particularly its impact on researchers applying for grants from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). This policy, largely driven by NIH's decision to fully fund grants up front the year they are awarded instead of spreading out the costs of grant, has significantly reduced the chances of securing both overall NIH and NIDDK specific funding for new and early-stage research proposals. This change threatens the momentum of kidney research at a time when scientific advances and innovation in kidney care are beginning to change the landscape of kidney care for the first time in decades. We are at an inflection point in kidney care and we cannot let this moment pass by us.

Investigators report increasing difficulty in securing support for meritorious applications, particularly those led by early-career scientists and researchers from underrepresented institutions. ASN is particularly alarmed to learn that NIH is shrinking the share of applications funded—in some cases cutting paylines by more than half (for example, the National Cancer Institute is projecting a drop from about 9% to just 4% of grant applications funded)¹. While the exact payline projections for NIDDK under this new policy remain unclear, any similar contraction would be devastating to a field already facing serious workforce and pipeline

¹ <https://www.statnews.com/2025/07/29/nih-cancer-institute-shrink-number-of-funded-research-grants/>

challenges and undermine efforts to explore urgently needed solutions for a population that includes more than 37 million Americans living with kidney diseases.

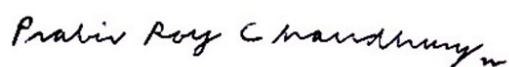
These twin shifts—limiting renewal grants and reducing paylines—dramatically raise competition and destabilize established research programs. For kidney research, which depends heavily on multi-year R01 funding, these policies threaten the continuity of ongoing studies and the training of future scientists. NIDDK's historic investments in studies such as the Chronic Renal Insufficiency Cohort (CRIC), the Kidney Precision Medicine Project (KPMP), and the APOL1 Long-term Kidney Transplantation Outcomes Network (APOLLO) have made significant strides, but these advances are now at risk. Disruptions to these and other efforts could delay urgently needed breakthroughs in kidney disease prevention, diagnosis, and treatment, as well as slow progress toward reducing disparities in care.

While ASN recognizes the fiscal constraints NIH faces, abrupt policy shifts jeopardize critical research infrastructure and hinder the ability of institutes like NIDDK to plan and execute their missions. Further, ASN urges collaboration between NIH and Congress to ensure timely release of appropriated funds and sustained support for biomedical research throughout fiscal years (FY) 2025, 2026, and beyond. Delayed disbursement or policy changes will not only disorient established researchers and discourage potential young investigators from pursuing research careers but threaten continuity of critical studies across disease areas. Moreover, recent analyses warn that such sweeping budget cuts and policy constraints will lead to long-term erosion of the scientific workforce, slower innovation, and diminished public health impacts that may take years to materialize but once begun are difficult to reverse².

ASN remains completely committed to collaborating with NIH and NIDDK to protect the progress the kidney research community has made and to ensure continued investment in scientific discovery for the benefit of people with kidney diseases. ASN stands ready to convene its members, particularly early-career and established kidney-focused investigators, for discussions or briefings that can inform NIH decision-making and support potential solutions.

Thank you for your consideration and your steadfast dedication to scientific quality, public health, and patient-centered research. To discuss this letter, ASN's support for kidney health research, or the society, please contact Ryan Murray, ASN Senior Manager of Policy and Government Affairs, at rmurray@asn-online.org or 202-400-2485.

Sincerely,



² Jalali MS, Hasgul Z. Potential Trade-Offs of Proposed Cuts to the US National Institutes of Health. JAMA Health Forum. 2025;6(7):e252228. doi:10.1001/jamahealthforum.2025.2228

Probir Roy-Chaudhury, MD, PhD, FASN
President

cc:

Griffin Rodgers, MD, MACP, NIDDK Director