

Monday, July 6, 2015

Hon. Diane Black (TN-6)
307 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Black,

On behalf of the American Society of Nephrology's (ASN) more than 15,000 physicians, scientists, nurses, and other health professionals, thank you for your leadership in introducing the Medicare Telehealth Parity Act of 2015. ASN strongly supports this legislation and is committed to working with you and original cosponsors Rep. Gregg Harper (R-MS), Rep. Mike Thompson (CA-5), and Rep. Peter Welch (VT-At-Large) in advocating for passage of this important bill.

Overall, ASN supports efforts to provide better patient access to care, including the use of mobile technology and remote telecommunications systems where appropriate. In particular, ASN commends the legislation's proposal to establish the patient's residence as an originating site for the provision of home dialysis services. The society also supports the proposal to allow home dialysis patients to conduct some monthly clinical assessments via telehealth.

As you know, patients who dialyze at home currently have to travel to a hospital or facility-qualifying site to interface with an approved practitioner. Providing reimbursement to physicians for caring for patients on dialysis via telehealth may enable more patients to consider home dialysis as an option, creating greater efficiency for both patients and physicians.

Home dialysis—in the form of peritoneal dialysis (PD) or home hemodialysis (HHD)—is an important treatment option that, for some patients, offers significant clinical and quality of life advantages. ASN believes that patients should, in consultation with their nephrology care team, have flexibility in selecting the dialysis modality and environment of their choice, including home dialysis. By allowing a patient's home to be a qualifying site for the provision of home dialysis (and thereby qualify for telehealth services), this legislation may help increase access to this important treatment option for ESRD patients.

ASN also commends the inclusion of remote patient monitoring services in this legislation. Patients with kidney disease of all stages, especially those with late-stage chronic kidney disease, stand to benefit substantially from greater attention and access to care for their kidney and other chronic conditions.

ASN stands ready to help you and your staff in any way necessary in order to advance this and other legislation that promotes home dialysis and improved patient access to care. Please contact ASN Manager of Policy and Government Affairs Rachel N. Meyer at 202-640-4659 or at rmeyer@asn-online.org with any questions or if there is anything the society can do to assist. Again, thank you for your leadership and commitment advancing access to safe, appropriate care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Himmelfarb', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Jonathan Himmelfarb, MD, FASN
President