Dear Ms. Tavenner and Dr. Gilfillan:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, thank you for your leadership of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI). Together, our organizations represent the patients, physicians, scientists, nurses, and other health professionals dedicated to advancing excellence in the care of patients with kidney disease. Foremost among our shared concerns is preserving equitable patient access to the highest quality kidney care at every stage of their disease—from chronic kidney disease to end-stage renal disease (ESRD) and dialysis or transplantation.

Our organizations support CMS and CMMI’s efforts to foster innovative changes in care delivery that promote high-quality, cost-efficient kidney care, including consideration of a pilot program for an integrated kidney care delivery model. Many of our organizations have appreciated the opportunity to independently discuss this possibility with CMMI over the past several months, and we are encouraged by the Agency’s commitment to obtaining the kidney patient perspective in developing an integrated kidney care delivery model. We look forward to the opportunity to participate in an innovative project that will improve the coordination and management of care for the nation’s patients with kidney disease. As the Agency prepares a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an integrated kidney care delivery model pilot program, our organizations would like to continue to participate in a dialogue with relevant agency staff and provide our expertise as appropriate.

Each of the stakeholder organizations listed below represents important perspectives that will assist CMS and CMMI in crafting a pilot program that will ultimately benefit the vulnerable Medicare beneficiaries whom we represent and serve. To that end and recognizing the significant effort that has already occurred to create a kidney integrated care program, our organizations request that CMS and CMMI convene an in-person stakeholder meeting to obtain input on all components of the kidney care integrated pilot program. We also suggest considering holding a meeting of a knowledgeable group of individuals to seek perspectives on the evaluation methodology and/or quality metrics to be utilized prior to release of an RFP, as well as potentially sharing a draft RFP with the stakeholder community.

Patients with kidney disease have uniquely complex comorbidities, polypharmacy needs, and access to care issues. These patients are also disproportionately represented among disadvantaged patient populations. Our organizations look forward to continuing to collaborate with CMS and CMMI to ensure that the design of a pilot program appropriately addresses the needs of this vulnerable patient population while facilitating novel and efficient care delivery.
Again, thank you for your commitment to improving care for patients with kidney disease through the development of an integrated kidney care delivery model pilot project. Advancing the quality of kidney care is a central goal for each of our organizations, and this CMS and CMMI initiative provides a unique opportunity toward achieving that objective. We look forward to the opportunity to continue the dialogue prior to the release of an RFP and as the pilot program unfolds. A contact list for each of the undersigned organizations is enclosed for your reference.

Sincerely,

American Association of Kidney Patients
American Kidney Fund
American Nephrology Nurses Association
American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
Dialysis Patient Citizens
National Kidney Foundation
Renal Physicians Association
Renal Support Network

cc: Jonathan Blum, Deputy Administrator and Director, CMS
    Sean Cavanaugh, Acting Deputy Director, Programs and Policy, CMMI
    Daniel Farmer, Stakeholder Engagement Group, CMMI
    Representative John Fleming, MD, Vice-Chair, Congressional Kidney Caucus
    David Hurwitz, Portfolio Manager, CMMI
    Representative Jesse Jackson, Jr., Vice-Chair, Congressional Kidney Caucus
    Representative Tom Marino, Co-Chair, Congressional Kidney Caucus
    Representative Jim McDermott, MD, Co-Chair, Congressional Kidney Caucus