

July 27, 2012

Marilyn Tavenner  
Acting Administrator  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
Hubert H. Humphrey Building  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Richard J. Gilfillan, MD  
Acting Director  
Center for Medicare and Medicaid  
Innovation  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid  
Services  
7500 Security Boulevard  
Baltimore, MD 21244

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