

June 12, 2013

Richard K. Nakamura, PhD  
Center for Scientific Review  
National Institutes of Health  
6701 Rockledge Drive MSC 7768  
Bethesda, MD 20892-7768

Dear Dr. Nakamura:

The American Society of Nephrology (ASN) and American Society of Pediatric Nephrology (ASPN) value the important role of the Center for Scientific Review (CSR) at NIH. It recently came to our organizations' attention that CSR may combine the Kidney Molecular Biology and Genitourinary Organ Development (KMBD) and Urologic and Genitourinary Physiology and Pathology (UGPP) Study Sections. We are writing to request that CSR delay that decision until the research constituencies affected—including ASN and ASPN—can discuss the decision with you.

ASN and ASPN are concerned that merging KMBD and UGPP could result in negative consequences for the millions of Americans with kidney disease. We would like to work with CSR to better understand the current study section situation and to collaborate to ensure that any changes CSR makes moving forward continue CSR's track record of identifying the highest-quality kidney research for funding.

Given the significant public health implications of kidney disease in the United States, ASN and ASPN believe that CSR's attention to kidney-related research is a particularly important issue. Of the more than 20 million Americans with kidney disease, which is often underdiagnosed and undertreated, nearly 600,000 currently have kidney failure and require dialysis to stay alive. Although they comprise less than 1 percent of Medicare beneficiaries, they account for nearly 7 percent of Medicare's budget.

Furthermore, congenital abnormalities are the number one cause of kidney disease in children. Studies that evaluate kidney development are critical to our future understanding of these abnormalities and provide hope for the development of therapeutics for children with kidney disease.

ASN and ASPN are also concerned that any changes that put the kidney research enterprise in jeopardy could further discourage young scientists from studying kidney disease at a time when their interest in biomedical research is waning due to budget cuts.

For all these reasons, ASN and ASPN ask CSR to postpone a final decision regarding the potential merger of KMBD and UGPP, and we look forward to working with the Center to accomplish its mission to identify the most promising research as it considers changes. We appreciate your consideration of our request and will be in touch to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,



Bruce A. Molitoris, MD, FASN  
ASN President



Joseph T. Flynn, MD, FASN  
ASPN President

cc: Francis S. Collins, MD, PhD  
Gregory G. Germino, MD  
Griffin P. Rodgers, MD  
Robert A. Star, MD