

March 19, 2012

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Senate L/HHS Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Senate L/HHS Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: HRSA Organ Donation & Transplantation Funding for FY 2013

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Shelby:

The undersigned organizations representing the Transplant Roundtable, a coalition of organ transplant patients, professionals, and related organizations, are pleased to offer strong support for federal funding for the organ donation and transplantation programs run by the Division of Transplantation (DoT) within the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). While it is vitally important that the federal government increase its commitment to these programs, given the austere budget constraints facing the nation, we are asking that you at a minimum preserve a level budget of \$24 million for these DoT programs from FY 2012 to FY 2013.

As of February 2012, the national patient waiting list for organ transplants contained nearly 113,000 listings of which over 91,000 involved a kidney transplant. Your effort in prioritizing funding for these programs reduces the number of deaths on the list and generates savings to the Medicare program through reduced reliance on kidney dialysis. Kidney transplantation, rather than dialysis, is considered the best option for adults and children who require replacement therapy, since it often provides better outcomes and quality of life. The DoT also enables transplant programs to expand paired kidney donation opportunities among multiple donors. Adequate funding also allows the reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses for living donors whose low income may otherwise prohibit them from being able to donate. It is simply not possible for the HRSA Division of Transplantation to achieve its goals without Congressional support and such dedicated funding.

We appreciate your leadership in securing these funds and urge you to go further than simply maintaining the budget at last year's levels for these federal organ donation and transplantation programs run through HRSA. Only with adequate funding will we be able to have a positive impact on the lives of transplant recipients and see the lengthy organ donor waiting list meaningfully decrease. Thank you again for your past support.

Sincerely,

American Association of Kidney Patients
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases
American Association of Tissue Banks
Association of Organ Procurement Organizations
American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology

American Society of Transplantation
American Society of Transplant Surgeons
American Transplant Foundation
Eye Bank Association of America
NATCO, The Organization for Transplant Professionals
National Kidney Foundation
Renal Physicians Association
Transplant Recipients International Organization
United Network for Organ Sharing