



PRESS RELEASE

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AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NEPHROLOGY CALLS ON BIDEN-HARRIS ADMINISTRATION TO INCREASE TRANSPLANT AVAILABILITY AND EQUITY

On behalf of U.S. kidney professionals and the nearly 800,000 Americans with kidney failure, the American Society of Nephrology urges implementation of the Organ Procurement Organization final rule that will increase organs available for transplant and reduce transplant inequities.

Washington, DC (February 4, 2021) — The American Society of Nephrology (ASN) reaffirms its support for the Organ Procurement Organizations (OPOs) Conditions for Coverage final rule issued on November 20, 2020. The society calls for the Biden-Harris administration to implement this final policy as expediently as possible. By bringing objective and verifiable standards to assess the performance of OPOs, this final rule will increase the number of organs available for transplant and reduce racial inequity in the U.S. transplant system.

Communities of color bear the disproportionate burden of the organ shortage and the failures of the US transplant system. ASN commends recent steps by the Biden-Harris Administration to address equity in federal programs and policies – including health care – and the OPO final rule is a huge step to advance those efforts.

In 2019, nearly 50% of White Americans on the transplant waitlist received a kidney, yet in the same year, only 26% of Black Americans received a transplant.ⁱⁱ Research has pointed to factors directly within the control of OPOs as responsible for part of this inequity, such as providing fewer opportunities for the families of potential organ donors to consider organ donation and not making OPO representatives available for consultation at the time of potential donation.ⁱⁱⁱ

Currently, the nearly 800,000 Americans with kidney failure must wait in a 100,000-person line to receive a life-saving transplant, the optimal therapy for most people with kidney failure. The COVID-19 pandemic has made receiving a transplant more critical than ever as Americans with kidney failure are the most at-risk among the Medicare population for severe outcomes from COVID-19, including hospitalization and death, and COVID-19 causes kidney damage in as many as 50% of hospitalized COVID-19 patients.^{iv, v}

Evaluating the performance of OPOs utilizing objective and verifiable metrics as outlined in the final rule will increase transparency and accountability in the US transplant system and increase equity in organ donation. The improvements outlined in the final rule are widely supported by a bipartisan group of stakeholders in Congress and across the federal government.

ASN is committed to building a more equitable future of kidney health and encourages the Biden-Harris administration implement the OPO final rule as soon as possible, consistent with its focus on health equity.

Since 1966, ASN has been leading the fight to prevent, treat, and cure kidney diseases throughout the world by educating health professionals and scientists, advancing research and innovation,

communicating new knowledge, and advocating for the highest quality care for patients. ASN has more than 20,000 members representing 131 countries. For more information, please visit www.asn-online.org or contact the society at 202-640-4660.

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ⁱ September, 27, 2019 [comment letter](#), December 17, 2019 [statement](#), February 21, 2020 [comment letter](#), October 1, 2020 [letter](#), December 3, 2020 [statement](#)

ⁱⁱ Based on OPTN data as of January 29, 2021. <https://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/data/view-data-reports/national-data/#>

ⁱⁱⁱ Siminoff, L A, Lawrence, R H, Arnold, R M. Comparison of black and white families' experiences and perceptions regarding organ donation requests. 2003, Crit Care Med. doi: 10.1097/00003246-200301000-00023.

^{iv} <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cms-proposes-medicare-payment-changes-support-innovation-and-increased-access-dialysis-home-setting>

^v Chan, L, et al. AKI in Hospitalized Patients with COVID-19. 2021. JASN. doi: 10.1681/ASN.2020050615