



PRESS RELEASE

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AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NEPHROLOGY COMMENDS CONGRESSIONAL RECOGNITION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MEDICARE END-STAGE RENAL DISEASE PROGRAM

Highlights

- The Congressional Kidney Caucus recognizes the 50th anniversary of the Medicare End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Program.
- Kidney health leaders join the Congressional Kidney Caucus in calling for greater emphasis on intervening earlier and increasing disease awareness, increasing access to transplantation, and accelerating innovation in kidney health in the future of the ESRD Program.

Washington, DC (October 31, 2022) — The American Society of Nephrology (ASN) applauds the Congressional Kidney Caucus—co-chaired by Representative Suzan DelBene (WA) and Representative Larry Bucshon, MD (IN)—for **recognizing** the 50th anniversary of Congress' enactment of the Medicare End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Program.

“ASN thanks the Congressional Kidney Caucus for recognizing this important anniversary,” said ASN President Susan Quaggin, MD, FASN. “Over the last half-century, millions of people have relied on this program to access life-saving care. The advent of new therapies and increased awareness of kidney diseases, underlying causes, and health disparities hold promise to delay and prevent the progression of kidney failure. I am thrilled to see how this progress will fuel new enthusiasm and innovation in the field of nephrology and improve the lives of the 37 million affected Americans and loved ones who grapple with these diseases every day.”

“37 million Americans are living with kidney disease and Medicare’s End-Stage Renal Disease Program has been the difference between life and death for millions of families across the country for half a century. To honor the 50th anniversary of this critical program, we call on our colleagues in Congress to renew their support for the millions of Americans with kidney diseases and kidney failure,” said Representative DelBene and Representative Bucshon in a statement.

Enacted by Congress in 1972, the Medicare ESRD program provides coverage for people living with kidney failure regardless of their age or income. More than 37 million people in the United States are living with kidney diseases, including more than 800,000 people whose disease has progressed to kidney failure, a life-threatening illness for

which the only therapies currently available to manage the condition are dialysis or a kidney transplant.

ASN leads or participates in numerous efforts to improve the care of people with kidney diseases, including the Excellence in Patient Care initiative, which seeks to improve safety and ensure optimal care; the Kidney Health Initiative, a partnership among ASN, the Food and Drug Administration, and more than 100 member organizations that provides a pre-competitive forum to advance patient-centered innovations; and KidneyX, a public-private partnership between ASN and the Department of Health and Human Services to accelerate innovations in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of kidney diseases. Most recently, ASN launched the We're United 4 Kidney Health initiative to align kidney health professionals with the goals of intervening earlier, transforming transplant, accelerating innovation, and achieving equity.

"It is imperative that the future of kidney health care offers people living with kidney diseases more choice in their care and improved outcomes," said incoming ASN President Michelle A. Josephson, MD, FASN. "The renewed emphasis on access to kidney transplant care within our field and by Congress is particularly encouraging. Currently, 13 Americans die every day while waiting for a kidney transplant; increasing the number of kidneys for transplant and improving access to this therapy is vital."

The Congressional Kidney Caucus voiced support for goals highlighted by the We're United 4 Kidney Health campaign, stating: "As we look toward the future, we must recommit ourselves to improving care for those impacted by kidney disease and lowering dialysis costs by boosting investment in programs focused on research and innovation, such as KidneyX. We must also prioritize prevention and improve access to transplants. We commend leaders across government, the scientific community, and patient advocates dedicated to this work."

On the 50th anniversary of Medicare coverage for kidney failure, ASN vows to continue working with policymakers and the kidney health community to establish policies that promote intervening earlier, transforming transplant, accelerating innovation, and achieving equity. ASN joins the kidney health community in celebrating this milestone and is committed to creating a world without kidney diseases.

About ASN

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 132 countries. For more information, visit www.asn-online.org and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).

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