



PRESS RELEASE

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**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE UNTIL
March 29, 2023, AT 8:00 AM ET**

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NEPHROLOGY AND AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF KIDNEY PATIENTS CALL ON CONGRESS TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR KIDNEY INNOVATION AND VETERANS WITH KIDNEY DISEASES

Highlights

- Today, advocates of the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) and American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP) are meeting with Congress, asking for their support of policies and funding to improve kidney health
- Congress should accelerate innovation by increasing investment in KidneyX
- Congress should support American veterans and active service members living with or at risk for kidney diseases

Washington, DC (March 29, 2023) – The prevalence of kidney diseases in the United States is at a record high. Today, more than 50 advocates from ASN and AAKP, representing people with kidney diseases and the health care professionals who serve them, will meet with their members of Congress and call for a \$25 million investment in kidney innovation at KidneyX and support of veteran active duty service members living with or at risk of kidney diseases through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VHA) Kidney Health Program and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP).

More than 37,000,000 Americans are living with kidney diseases, including more than 800,000 with kidney failure, a life-threatening condition for which there is no cure. Despite high levels of government spending, annually \$150 billion, on the care of people living with kidney diseases and kidney failure, therapeutic options remain limited.

“The 37 million Americans living with kidney diseases, including 7.7 percent of U.S. veterans, deserve care that meets their needs,” stated ASN President Michelle A. Josephson, MD, FASN. “ASN is proud to partner with the AAKP for the eleventh annual Kidney Health Advocacy Day to jointly call on Congress to increase funding for innovation at KidneyX and funding for veterans and active service members at the Veterans Health

Administration Kidney Health Program and Department of Defense Congressional Directed Medical Research Program.”

KidneyX is a public-private partnership between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and ASN. Since 2019, KidneyX has awarded 67 prizes across five competitions for patient-centered solutions ranging from dialysis accessible clothing to ground-breaking prototypes of artificial kidney and xenotransplant technology.

ASN and AAKP are asking Congress to provide full funding of \$25 million for KidneyX in fiscal year 2024 to allow KidneyX to expand the number of innovators it supports and accelerate the development of transformative technologies, particularly the world’s first artificial kidney.

AAKP President Edward V. Hickey, III, USMC, stated, “Kidney patients and kidney professionals are united in our mission to limit the human costs of kidney diseases and the impact they have on the medical system and taxpayers. Our nation has the ingenuity to end kidney diseases through greater investments in research, collaborations like KidneyX, and through policies that support, not impede, greater private sector investment and innovation. Kidney patients, including veterans with kidney diseases, deserve nothing less.” Hickey is the Chair of AAKP’s [Veterans Health Initiative](#).

The VA’s Veterans Health Administration (VHA), provides care to the 19 million U.S. veterans, including the 7.7 percent of veterans living with kidney diseases through the VHA Kidney Health Program. Specifically, The VHA Kidney Health Program provides clinical care, education, research, and informatic resources to improve kidney health care, including offering outpatient dialysis care to veterans in more than 70 locations across the country. AAKP and ASN are asking Congress to support additional funds for expansions in virtual care and home dialysis programs, a rare kidney disease registry for veterans and implementation of pragmatic clinical trials.

DoD CDMRP is one of the largest funders of kidney health outside the NIH. Last year, Congress provided \$1.5 billion to the CDMRP for research of important health issues, including kidney cancer and rare kidney diseases such as polycystic kidney disease. AAKP and ASN are asking Congress to support CDMRP funding for spatial proteomics related to kidney biopsies and for testing precision pathways for acute and chronic kidney diseases.

About the American Society of Nephrology (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 nearly 21,000 members representing 140 countries. For more information, visit www.asn-online.org and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).

About the American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP):

Founded in 1969, AAKP is the largest kidney patient organization driving patient consumer care choice and treatment innovations. In 2019, AAKP declared [The Decade of the Kidney™](#) to elevate national and global attention on the needs of kidney patients and the need to transform status quo care. Follow AAKP on social media at [@kidneypatient on Facebook](#) and [@kidneypatients on Twitter](#), and visit our website at <https://aakp.org/>.

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