

## *Our Voices Influence Choices!*

### **ADVOCATE TO PROTECT LIVING KIDNEY DONORS**

Join us in our efforts to pass the Living Donor Protection Act (H.R. 1270). You can do this by using your voice to support federal legislation that encourages organ donation and protects living organ donors, such as the [Living Donor Protection Act \(H.R. 1224\)](#). This would ensure living donors are not denied or given limited coverage or higher premiums for life, disability, and long-term care insurance. It would also clarify that living organ donors may use Family and Medical Leave time to recover from surgery without risking job security.

#### ***Remove Financial Barriers***

Join efforts to support financial assistance offered to living organ donors to cover all expenses related to organ donation, including lost wages, travel expenses, lodging, food and child or elder dependent care expenses incurred during the donor's recovery, as well as living donor medical care and extended follow up visits to ensure health and useful data collection.

#### ***Increase Awareness & Inspire Participation***

Nearly 680,000 Americans have irreversible kidney failure and need a transplant or dialysis. More than 475,000 are already on dialysis – and over 95,000 are waiting for a kidney for their transplant from a deceased donor. The wait for a deceased donor's kidney can be upwards of 3-7 years. There is no wait after testing and approving an acceptable living kidney donor. We must encourage agencies like Health and Human Services (HHS) to create engagement materials to educate the public, increase awareness and inspire participation.

### **ADVOCATE <sup>to</sup> PERMANENTLY EXTEND TRANSPLANT RECIPIENT DRUG COVERAGE**

Join efforts to permanently extending Medicare [coverage of immunosuppressive drugs](#) (also known as anti-rejection medications) for the life of a patient's transplant. This is an extremely important initiative to prevent rejection and loss of one's transplanted organ. Current legislation only covers transplant patients for 36 months post-transplant, leaving recipients at risk of losing their transplanted organ due to financial hardships.

Currently, when a recipient reaches 36 months post-transplant, their coverage ends. Loss of coverage can cause recipients to skip doses or be without essential medications, which results in rejection and the need for dialysis to survive. Oddly enough, Medicare pays for dialysis for as long as a patient is on it—even though dialysis costs 22 billion more than a transplant over the course of 5 years and more than double that in 10 years. Let's use our voices to point out these absurdities as we work to influence our right for better outcomes.

### **ADVOCATE FOR EARLY DETECTION & PREVENTION**

Support efforts to [increase awareness, prevention and proactive patient care of Chronic Kidney Disease](#)—a disease that affects more than 30 million Americans—and most are not even aware that they have it. Chronic Kidney Disease causes more deaths than breast cancer or prostate cancer combined. We must work to increase awareness in prevention, early detection and methods to slow progression.

**High Risk Groups:** African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asians & Pacific Islanders are at increased risk for developing kidney disease.  
(African Americans @ 3X's higher risks and Hispanics @1.5X's higher)