



HILL DAY
Sept. 19, 2017

AAKP Participates in ASN's Kidney Community Advocacy Day (KCAD) on September 19, 2017

On September 19, 2017, advocates from AAKP and 21 other healthcare organizations met their Representatives and Senators to urge Congress to continue its historic support of research funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and to cosponsor and pass the Living Donor Protection Act (H.R. 1270), no-cost legislation to eliminate barriers to living donation and increase access to transplants.

AAKP Ambassadors Dave White (MD), Genevieve Morgan (ME), Edward Drake II (GA), and Patrick Gee (VA) joined President Paul Conway, V.P. Richard Knight, and Director of Stakeholder Operations Erin Kahle for a training dinner to discuss the legislative asks. President Conway addressed the audience about the importance of a unified message and thanked his donor and donor family for giving him a second chance 20 years ago. Hill meetings were scheduled for the following morning, with small groups visiting offices in their delegation.

In January, the GAO released a report detailing that 17% of Americans (40 million) have kidney diseases and about 680,000 have kidney failure – most of whom rely on dialysis to live. The GAO data shows that Medicare spends nearly \$33 billion on kidney failure, while the investment in federally funded kidney research is the equivalent of just about 1% of that amount. The United States Renal Data System (USRDS) data places total Medicare spending for all kidney diseases at \$103 billion. In order to bring better value to Medicare and improve patient outcomes, patient and physician advocates urged Congress to support an additional \$150 million per year over 10 years to establish a Special Statutory Funding Program for Kidney Research at The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), supplementing regularly appropriated funds they currently receive.

Advocates also asked Congress to pass the Living Donor Protection Act, H.R. 1270, to remove barriers to living organ donation to address the nation's organ shortage crisis. There are over 100,000 Americans on the kidney transplant wait list. While every 14 minutes a patient is added to that list, 13 Americans die every day waiting for a kidney transplant. Besides increasing quality of life, transplants also save Medicare expenditures compared to dialysis: Medicare about \$30,000 per transplant patient versus nearly \$90,000 per hemodialysis patient annually on average.

Enjoy some photos from the event!



AAKP Group



Outside Representative Pingree's (ME-1) office



Visiting with Representative Jeffries' (NY-8)
Legislative Counsel, Zoe Oreck



Outside Senator Nelson's (FL) office



Paul Conway addresses the audience at the
training dinner