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TOP KIDNEY GROUP SALUTES CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON TRANSPLANT DRUGS FOR PATIENTS

AAKP Calls for Immediate Senate Action, Asks President Trump to Sign Upon Passage

Washington, D.C.: The American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP) released the following statement regarding the U.S. House of Representatives' passage of legislation authorizing immunosuppressive drug coverage for kidney transplant patients, an action taken on the evening of December 8, 2020:

"The American Association of Kidney Patients, the nation's largest kidney patient organization, thanks Members of the U.S. House of Representatives for elevating the democratic ideal of bipartisanship and the voices of kidney patients through passage of immunosuppressive drug coverage for kidney transplant recipients. COVID-19 poses a serious threat to American kidney health, has resulted in increased incidents of acute kidney injury (AKI), and created new concerns for current and future dialysis and organ transplant needs. The decision to donate a kidney to save another human life is an inherently American act of bravery and selflessness and Congress has honored generations of kidney donors, patients, and medical professionals who have worked to remove this barrier to increased kidney donation and less time on organ waitlists. AAKP thanks Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA), Representatives Ron Kind (D-WI), Michael Burgess (R-TX), Jimmy Panetta (D-CA), Jason Smith (R-MO), and all other Members for their principled leadership and respect for kidney patient insights. We also extend our deep appreciation to our strategic allies including U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar, Comptroller General of the United States Gene Dodaro, and Congressional Budget Office Directors Phillip Swagel, predecessor Keith Hall, and their appointed and career staffs for their respect and substantive engagement with kidney patients and AAKP on this issue.

AAKP now respectfully calls upon Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) to listen closely to our fellow kidney patients and

donor families within their respective states and across America, and immediately move forward with bipartisan Senate passage of immunosuppressive drug coverage. Further, we call upon President Donald J. Trump to sign this legislation when it is presented to the White House, and, by doing so, further extend his record of historically significant achievements for greater kidney patient consumer care choice and the transformation of outdated status quo kidney care, consistent with the widely acclaimed and bipartisan supported 2019 *Executive Order on Advancing American Kidney Health*.”

In 2019, AAKP launched [The Decade of the Kidney™](#), a strategic effort to organize kidney patient consumers nationally and globally to drive policies to prevent kidney injury and disease, support greater patient care choice, drive innovations including artificial implantable and wearable kidneys, and timely access to treatment options including preemptive kidney transplants.

In November of 2020, over 25 AAKP kidney advocates were recognized with Presidential Volunteer Service Awards (PVSA) for their ongoing advocacy for kidney transplants and response to the COVID-19 pandemic ([read announcement](#)). AAKP patient volunteers accelerated the organization’s national and global impact through sophisticated virtual platforms, international patient group partnerships, clinical journal editorials, television, radio, social media, and a growing [Patient Ambassador Initiative](#). At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, AAKP changed all 2020 events to free virtual access, prioritized COVID-19 topics, and leveraged tactics to engage a wider audience. In the past eight months, AAKP has broadcasted expert COVID-19 insights through one [global](#) and two [national virtual events](#), a dozen [webinars](#), and launched advocacy campaigns to [highlight disparities](#) in minority and [kidney patient representation in COVID-19 clinical trials](#) and [vaccine distribution protocols](#). Viewership for 2020 AAKP programs now exceeds 80,000 people across 70 countries and is growing rapidly. International and national program faculty has included 90 medical practitioners and researchers, and 60 patient experts. The [AAKP Global Summit on Kidney Innovations](#), conducted in partnership with The George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences, alone reached over 20,000 patients and professionals worldwide in July of 2020.

AAKP Board Members and patient members play key roles in top federal initiatives including: implementation of the Executive Order on *Advancing American Kidney Care*; the National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIH/NIDDK) Kidney Precision Medicine Project (KPMP); the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and ASN partnership, the Kidney Health Initiative (KHI); and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Kidney Innovation Accelerator, or KidneyX.

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Established in 1969, AAKP is the oldest and largest independent kidney patient organization in the United States, with growing international impact through a global network of patient

advocates, kidney researchers, medical innovation leaders, and policy influencers. AAKP is among the strongest advocates for kidney patient consumer care choice and the full alignment of kidney care treatment to the aspirations of individual patients, including their pursuit of full-time work, professional careers, families, home ownership, and a secure retirement. From 1969-1973, AAKP patients led the effort in the U.S. Congress, alongside senior White House officials, to establish the End Stage Renal Disease Program (ESRD), which has saved over a million lives through modern dialysis coverage as administered by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Assistance. For more information, visit www.aakp.org. Follow AAKP on social media: [@kidneypatient on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/kidneypatient), and [@kidneypatients on Twitter](https://twitter.com/kidneypatients).