

TRANSPLANT ROUNDTABLE

TESTIMONY
FOR THE WRITTEN RECORD
BEFORE THE
APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,
EDUCATION AND RELATED AGENCIES
UNITED STATES SENATE
ON FISCAL YEAR 2016 FUNDING FOR THE

DIVISION OF TRANSPLANTATION

HEALTH RESOURCES AND SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

BY THE UNDERSIGNED ORGANIZATIONS OF THE TRANSPLANT ROUNDTABLE

Alliance for Paired Donation
American Association of Kidney Patients
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases
American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
American Society of Transplantation
American Society of Transplant Surgeons
American Transplant Foundation
Association of Organ Procurement Organizations
Coalition to Promote Living Kidney Donation
Dialysis Patient Citizens
Donate Life America
Eye Bank Association of America
NATCO, The Organization for Transplant Professionals
National Kidney Foundation
National Kidney Registry
Renal Physicians Association
Texas Transplant Society
Transplant Recipients International Organization
United Network for Organ Sharing
WaitList Zero

APRIL 3, 2015

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of the Transplant Roundtable, a coalition of organizations representing organ transplant patients and professionals, we offer our strong support for increased federal funding in fiscal year 2016 for the organ donation and transplantation programs administered by the Division of Transplantation (DoT) within the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

We applaud you and this Subcommittee for many years of unwavering commitment to these programs and ask again for your assistance. While we recognize the serious challenges regarding the federal budget and annual appropriations, it is critical that the federal government retain its strong commitment to the Division of Transplantation (“DoT”). The President proposed a FY 2016 appropriation of \$23,549,000, the same level as the FY 2015 appropriated amount.

Given the persistent need for donor organs and the many important programs administered and supported by the Division of Transplantation, we ask that you appropriate an increase of \$3,000,000 for fiscal year 2016 to bring the budget to \$26,549,000. This appropriation level would finally bring the DoT budget beyond the historical high of \$25 million achieved back in FY 2002.

The DoT serves a unique and irreplaceable function in helping to facilitate organ donation and transplantation, serving the needs of critically ill Americans in need of an organ transplant to survive. Programs supported and administered by the DoT save lives and improve the quality of life of thousands of Americans. DoT provides oversight and funding for the nation's organ procurement, allocation, and transplantation system through the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN). It coordinates all organ and tissue donation activities and funds donation research.

Further, through the National Living Donor Assistance Center (NLDAC), it provides funding for travel and subsistence expenses of living donors whose low incomes may otherwise prohibit them from donating. The NLDAC program has helped facilitate organ transplantation for over 2,500 recipients since its inception, saving lives while saving the Medicare program over \$60 million in dialysis services that were no longer necessary due to successful transplantation. These and other programs funded through DoT are very worthy of additional federal investment as they produce a major return on this investment, year after year.

According to the Organ Procurement and Transplant Network (OPTN), there were 29,532 organ transplants performed from 14,412 donors in 2014. One organ donor can provide enough organs to save up to eight lives. And yet, demand for donor organs continues to outstrip supply by a wide, persistent margin. Every ten minutes a person is added to the transplant waiting list and 21 individuals die each day awaiting a donor organ, according to the OPTN. According to the United Network of Organ Sharing (UNOS), as of March 2015, the national patient waiting list for organ transplants contained more than 78,000 “active” patients and over 123,000 total patients awaiting donor organs. “Active” status refers to patients who are medically ready and able to receive a transplant when one becomes available.

Congressional, agency and private sector support has resulted in transplantation that has saved and enhanced the lives of well more than 600,000 people in the United States, helped to

greatly reduce the number of deaths on the waiting list, and generated substantial savings to the Medicare program through foregone need for dialysis. As a country, we do very well in facilitating and providing these life-saving services, but we need sustained federal commitment and resources to continue to meet the relentless, continuing need for donor organs.

Your leadership has been exemplary over many years on transplantation and organ donation activities. On behalf of transplant patients and their families, we ask that you to continue your leadership on federal organ donation and transplantation programs by increasing federal funding for the Division of Transplantation under the Health Resources and Services Administration.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony for the written record.