

October 5, 2020

Senator Bill Cassidy, MD
520 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20002

Senator Richard Durbin
711 Hart Senate Office Building
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Representative Michael Burgess, MD
2161 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Ron Kind
1502 Longworth House Office Building
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Dear Senators Cassidy and Durbin and Representatives Kind and Burgess:

As health care providers working in organ donation and transplantation, we are writing to offer our strong support for the Comprehensive Immunosuppressive Drug Coverage for Kidney Transplant Patients Act of 2019 (H.R. 5534/S. 3353). We applaud your efforts in introducing this non-controversial, bipartisan legislation that would save lives and reduce Medicare spending by ensuring transplant patients have access to life-saving immunosuppressive medications.

Medicare Part B coverage of immunosuppressive drugs ends 36 months post-transplant for non-aged, non-disabled kidney recipients. Many of our patients lack affordable coverage when their Medicare benefits end and are forced to ration or forgo their medications altogether. If a patient is unable to maintain their strict medication regimen, the transplanted kidney will reject, resulting in increased rates of mortality or forcing the patient to return to dialysis – a costly and burdensome treatment that reduces the patient’s overall health outcomes and quality of life.

Extending Medicare’s coverage limit on immunosuppressive medications would not only save lives, but it would also save Medicare money. By HHS’ own analysis, extending Medicare’s coverage of anti-rejection medications for the lifetime of the organ could save approximately \$300 million over 10 years. Medicare spends approximately \$90,000 per year on each dialysis patient, whereas Part B expenses for immunosuppressive drugs are only \$2,300 per patient, per year.

As you know, this legislation has strong momentum and is finally poised to pass after nearly two decades of advocacy from the kidney and transplant community on this issue. We were pleased that the bill was reported out favorably by the House Energy and Commerce Committee, receiving praise and support from both sides of the aisle. Additionally, with the recent preliminary CBO report indicating the bill would result in an estimated net savings of \$70 million over ten years, we believe there are no additional obstacles that could potentially ensnare its passage. The time is now. As we know all too well from our patient interactions, extending the current immunosuppressive coverage policy is the right thing to do—it will save lives and reduce Medicare spending.

We thank you for your continued leadership as you advocate for passing this bill via any moving legislative vehicle before the end of this Congress.

Sincerely,

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