

TRANSPLANT ROUNDTABLE

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

December 20, 2013

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Senate L/HHS Appropriation Subcommittee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Ranking Member
Senate L/HHS Appropriation Subcommittee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Kingston
Chairman
House L/HHS Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House L/HHS Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: HRSA Organ Donation & Transplantation Funding for FY 2014

Dear Chairmen Harkin and Kingston, and Ranking Members Moran and DeLauro:

On behalf of the Transplant Roundtable, a coalition of organ transplant patient, professional, and related organizations, the undersigned organizations urge you to adopt the Senate's appropriation level, as well as the President's budget request, of \$26,015,000 for FY 2014 for the organ donation and transplantation programs run by the Division of Transplantation (DoT) within the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). This represents a \$2 million increase in funding over the enacted FY 2012 funding level and a \$1 million increase over funding level contained in the FY 2013 Continuing Resolution.

We applaud you for your many years of unwavering commitment to these programs and ask again for your assistance. While we recognize the serious challenges regarding the federal budget, it is critical that the federal government retain its strong commitment to these programs.

The DoT serves a unique and irreplaceable function. *Adoption of a \$2 million increase in funding for FY 2014 would make a huge difference and ultimately save lives.* 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 income may otherwise prohibit them from donating. 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.

The Division of Transplantation reports that each day, an average of 77 people receive organ transplants; however, an average of 18 people die each day waiting for transplants that do not occur because of the shortage of donated organs. As of December 2013, the national patient waiting list for organ transplants contained more than 131,000 listings and these numbers continue to grow. The total number of transplants during 2012 was approximately 28,000, with more than 14,000 donors during that same time period.

Congressional, agency and private sector support has resulted in transplantation that has saved and enhanced the lives of 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 this mission.

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 again champion federal organ donation and transplantation programs run through HRSA.

If you have any questions, please contact Peter Thomas, American Society of Transplant Surgeons, at peter.thomas@ppsv.com or 202-466-6550. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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
Dialysis Patient Citizens
Eye Bank Association of America
NATCO, The Organization for Transplant Professionals
Renal Physicians Association
Texas Transplant Society
Transplant Recipients International Organization
United Network for Organ Sharing
Alliance for Paired Donation
Association of Organ Procurement Organizations
PKD (Polycystic Kidney Disease) Foundation