



Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert  
F. Kennedy Jr.  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Cc:  
Heather Flick Melanson, Chief of Staff  
Stefanie Spear, Principal Deputy Chief of Staff /  
Senior Counselor to the Secretary  
Hannah Anderson, Deputy Chief of Staff, Policy

March 11, 2025

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

The National Kidney Foundation (NKF) is writing to congratulate you on your confirmation to serve as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. NKF has a long history of working with HHS to materially improve the diagnosis and treatment of chronic kidney disease (CKD). We hope to continue this partnership over your tenure as Secretary and write to request a meeting to discuss.

We share your commitment to strengthen chronic disease prevention and management. NKF was a close partner to the Trump Administration in the development and implementation of the 2019 Executive Order on Advancing American Kidney Health<sup>1</sup> and its bold policy proposals to disrupt the kidney care paradigm for all Americans. We were gratified to see the Executive Order referenced in the Make America Healthy Again Commission fact sheet. NKF was a signatory to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Trump Administration to aid the Secretary's efforts to educate patients and support programs that promote kidney disease awareness.

Unfortunately, the outgoing Administration failed to prioritize the Trump Administration's commitment to this important initiative. Re-instating the MOU between the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the NKF would complement efforts to empower patients about their kidney disease risk.

There are many tangible policy actions that could be taken across HHS to promote patient empowerment, robust competition, and enhanced patient choice. Continued transformation of the healthcare system, whether by Congressional or Executive action, will put Americans on the path towards better health. We encourage you to build on key provisions of the Advancing American Kidney Health Executive Order including:

- Section 4: Payment Model to Identify and Treat At-Risk Populations Earlier in Disease Development – NKF was a partner to the CMS Innovation Center on the model that became the Kidney Care Choices Model.
- Section 5: Payment Model to Increase Home Dialysis and Kidney Transplants – NKF lobbied across government to see the End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Treatment Choices (ETC) Model implemented.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-advancing-american-kidney-health/>

- Section 7: Increasing Utilization of Available Organs – NKF supported new performance metrics for Organ Procurement Organizations (OPOs) and is working to see accountability for organ procurement implemented.

We know that the Medicare ESRD program saves countless lives, yet kidney failure has become an extraordinary burden on the American taxpayer. In 2021, traditional Medicare spending on kidney disease exceeded \$130 billion annually.<sup>2</sup> As ESRD beneficiaries transition to Medicare Advantage, MA ESRD expenditures are rapidly increasing, growing from \$12.5 billion to \$18.3 billion in a single year.<sup>3</sup> These figures are even more staggering given that most kidney failure is preventable with early detection and intervention. In 2021, Medicare CKD expenditures for all aged and disabled beneficiaries exceeded \$86 billion.<sup>4</sup> Kidney failure encapsulates an existential challenge facing the Medicare program. We must take action to solve the issue.

Disruption of the kidney care paradigm is desperately needed to achieve the President's goal of making measurable progress on eliminating the burden of chronic disease on patients, communities, and taxpayers. We must diagnose people early and empower them to achieve their health goals through access to every possible intervention, especially proven lifestyle interventions, to slow or stop CKD progression. State and local governments know their populations best and should be better leveraged through support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to adopt proven, innovative strategies to improve CKD population health. The lynchpin is ensuring that Americans know when they are at risk for chronic conditions like CKD.

NKF respectfully requests a meeting to discuss the re-instating the MOU and to serve as a resource to the Administration in seeing your commitment to reducing chronic disease burden succeed. Please contact Jesse Roach, MD, Senior Vice President of Government Relations, at [jesse.roach@kidney.org](mailto:jesse.roach@kidney.org) to discuss further.

Sincerely,



Kevin Longino, MBA  
NKF CEO and Kidney Patient



Kirk Campbell, MD  
NKF President

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<sup>2</sup> <https://usrdp-adr.niddk.nih.gov/2023/end-stage-renal-disease/9-healthcare-expenditures-for-persons-with-esrd>

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> <https://usrdp-adr.niddk.nih.gov/2023/chronic-kidney-disease/6-healthcare-expenditures-for-persons-with-ckd>