



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
TRANSPLANTATION



National Kidney Foundation®



The Alliance
LEADERSHIP IN ORGAN DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION



The Organization for Transplant Professionals

September 15, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman, Finance Committee
United States Senate

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member, Finance Committee
United States Senate

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman, Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee
United States Senate

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member, Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee
United States Senate

RE: Senate Health Care Repeal & Replacement Measure and Unintended Consequences for Organ Transplant Patients and Individuals with Pre-Existing Conditions

Dear Senate Leaders,

On behalf of the field of solid organ transplantation, our organizations write to you today to express strong concern for the future of transplant patients, living donors and their families. More specifically, our organizations fear that the current health care repeal & replacement proposals under consideration in the U.S. Senate may undercut protections for transplant patients and the most vulnerable Americans — individuals with preexisting conditions.

At present, the Senate repeal & replacement proposed measures, as well as the House-passed American Health Care Act (AHCA), will likely expose patients with pre-existing conditions to premium spikes and reduced benefits. As a consequence, health care coverage will simply be out of reach for this very fragile population of patients.

Among the nation's many populations of individuals managing pre-existing conditions, end-stage organ failure patients are one of the most vulnerable groups. Transplantation is a life-saving therapy that allows individuals to regain their health and potentially return to work. To

date, current Senate proposed health care repeal & replacement measures will likely compromise the health and lives of those individuals awaiting a lifesaving donor organ.

Although some of the Senate proposed measures as well as the House-passed AHCA do include a level of funding for States to address and hopefully provide coverage to those individuals with pre-existing conditions, there continues to be little evidence at this point as to whether the funding levels would be adequate to care for this growing patient population. Transplant recipients and their families should not have to choose between their health care coverage and life's other essential necessities. Access to health care coverage only becomes a reality when the care is affordable. It is essential that Congress address the issue of patient pre-existing conditions and affordability of care in a thoughtful and thorough manner.

As you continue to debate a healthcare replacement measure, our organizations encourage you to also address some of the following patient care priorities:

Increase the number people insured as this is the cheapest option for health care coverage – not unreimbursed ER visits.

1. Focus on prevention. For example, the reduction in smoking has saved countless lives, a similar reduction in obesity would do the same.
2. Cover pre-existing conditions – the only way to make this cost effective is to expand the number of insured.
3. Broaden insurance, so it covers what is unexpected, not what is expected.
4. Offer a transparent free market approach, so patients are aware of what is being charged and what is being paid.
5. Cost reduction through efficient and better care.

We applaud and commend the efforts of those Members of Congress and Capitol Hill staff that have worked tirelessly for years to improve and strengthen our nation's health care delivery system. The transplant community has worked successfully for many years with champions on both sides of the aisle in the upper and lower chambers of Congress. Organ transplantation and the gift of life is not a partisan or political issue. Rather it is about saving, extending and preserving life.

Our organizations strongly encourage you to ensure that those most vulnerable patient populations, to include transplant patients, are adequately addressed in any health care replacement package that moves through the upper chamber. Please do not hesitate to contact any of our organizations if you have questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

American Society of Transplantation

National Kidney Foundation

The Alliance – Organ Donation & Transplantation Alliance

NATCO – The Organization for Transplant Professionals