

# Policy Update

## Organ Procurement

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nority and ethnic concerns during my nearly 30-year career in donation and transplantation, I would like to offer a word about donation and communities of color. Increased focus has been given recently to minority authorization rates and a perceived burden of producing good results in these measures based on the racial and ethnic composition of the OPO service area. This increased attention has been a positive development because it allows for a full-throated discussion about race, ethnicity, and the nexus of organ donation. The view of race and ethnicity needs to evolve in our community much the same as it has for our nation across various assets and services. Minorities donate. Further, in some parts of the country, minorities donate at the same rate as do Caucasians. Thus, it can be done, and when the DSA functions as a true community, it is done.”

### Success threshold and expected donation rate/decertification

ASN supported redefining the definition of success and basing that success on how OPOs perform on the outcome measures of donation rate and organ transplantation rate compared with a top percent of donation and transplantation rates for all OPOs.

Currently, CMS conducts recertification inspections of OPOs for compliance with requirements and performance standards every four years as a condition of Medicare and Medicaid participation.

In addition to those periodic recertification inspections, the rule proposed a review of OPO performance every 12 months to provide more frequent feedback to all OPOs. If an OPO’s outcome measures—its donation and transplantation rates—fall statistically significantly below the

ASN believes that reforming the current system of OPO performance oversight is necessary to enable the Advancing American Kidney Health goal of doubling the number of kidneys available for transplant by 2030 . . .

top 25% of OPOs (as defined by a given OPO’s upper limit of the one-sided 95% confidence interval falling lower than the threshold rate), CMS would require that OPO to revise its quality assurance and performance improvement (QAPI) program in order to improve. ASN requested “further information from CMS on the process by which OPO underperformance would be remediated after the new metrics go into effect and whether the top 25% rate is static or reoccurring.”

ASN recommended that CMS “should stagger the end of the four-year deadline so that not all 58 OPOs are on the same deadline—for example, 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 as the elections for the United States Senate are structured—to ensure that as some OPOs are potentially decertified, other higher-functioning OPOs are in existence to maintain the supply of procured organs as well as bid for the contracts of any OPOs that have failed to improve their performance during their four-year window.”

While mindful of the need to ensure access to organs and transplantation, ASN reminded CMS that “[O

verall, however, stakeholders’ fear of change should be weighed against the very real fear, lived and expressed by the patients ASN members serve, that their lives will end before they can access a transplant because OPOs are underperforming. These patients might not receive a transplant because the system has not asked every OPO to meet an objective, verifiable standard of performance with an evidence-based standard of practice.”

### Organ transplantation rates by type of organ

ASN supported reporting outcome measures of organ transplant rates by type of organ. The criteria for qualifying for a transplant not only differ based on transplant center, but also on the type of organ. In reporting these data, ASN suggested that CMS consider how to distinguish the rate of organs transplanted versus those that were expected to be transplanted by organ type as well. This ratio would likely differ based on type of procurement, such as thoracic and abdominal organ procurement; donor management factors prior to procurement as these can affect usability and transplant success; and other factors.

Other regulatory steps to improve access to transplantation are expected this year. Follow *Kidney News* for more details.

### References

1. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-advancing-american-kidney-health/>
2. <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cms-3380-p-ofr.pdf>
3. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/31199562>
4. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=goldberg+doby> ■

## Nationwide Campaign Aims to Mobilize Public, Kidney Community to Encourage Early Detection and Management of Kidney Disease

A nationwide public awareness campaign to promote early detection, treatment, and management of kidney disease is launching in March 2020 in conjunction with National Kidney Month.

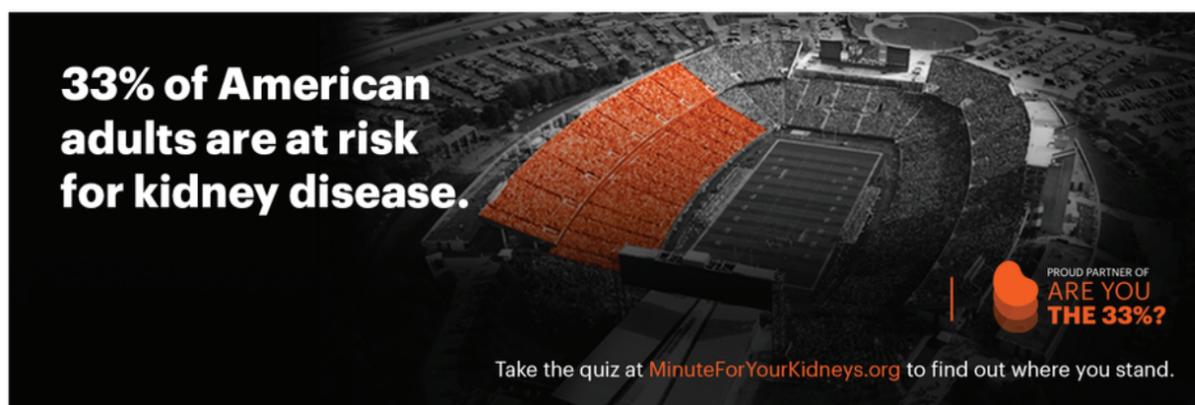
The campaign, called “Are You the 33%?” aims to engage every adult to learn more about their risk for kidney disease by taking a simple, one-minute online quiz at [MinuteForYourKidneys.org](http://MinuteForYourKidneys.org).

One in three adults in the United States is at risk for kidney disease.

“Look around the next time you’re sitting in a school auditorium or even in a giant professional sports stadium; one-third of every adult in there with you is at risk of developing kidney disease,” said Kevin Longino, CEO of the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) and recipient of a kidney transplant.

Launched by NKF, the campaign is among the first steps in a collaborative partnership among the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), NKF, and ASN to raise awareness about kidney disease and improve patient outcomes. The Public Awareness Initiative was outlined in the Executive Order on Advancing American Kidney Health, the historic action to transform kidney health signed by President Donald J. Trump in July 2019.

The National Kidney Foundation has entered into strategic alliances with CVS Kidney Care, Healthy.io and Laboratory Corporation of America in order to carry out the campaign with Otsuka America Pharmaceutical, Inc. serving as a Campaign Sponsor.



In its partnership with HHS and NKF, ASN will fulfill the Public Awareness Initiative outlined in the Executive Order by educating clinical professionals and spurring innovations by entities serving the kidney community. Officially launching in fall 2020, ASN’s campaign will target and inform kidney care professionals about how to succeed in a future where the practice of nephrology includes more home-based therapies and transplantations. In addition, ASN will build off its efforts in 2019 and continue to engage capital markets to dispel myths, encourage prioritizing the kidney space for investment, and advocate that nephrology is open for business.

The public awareness “Are you the 33%?” campaign will include “compelling visuals, a thought-provoking social media campaign, and a broadcast PSA launching later this

month with television and film star Wilmer Valderrama, [and will focus] on the 33% of American adults at risk for developing dangerous, life-threatening kidney disease,” according to a press release issued by NKF. “Risk factors include diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity and family history of kidney disease.”

The campaign microsite will be available in Spanish starting in September 2020.

“More than 90% of the 37,000,000 Americans and 850,000,000 individuals worldwide affected with kidney disease are unaware that they are even sick,” said Anupam Agarwal, MD, FASN, ASN President. “This silent epidemic often strikes without symptoms. Millions of people won’t know they have kidney disease until their kidneys stop working and it’s too late.” ■