Since last year’s Kidney Week, ASN has continued to focus on the five goals in its strategic plan.

**Goal 1—Lead the kidney community by focusing on education, communications, policy, and collaboration**

*Report Outlines Deficiencies in Kidney Research Funding*

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report “National Institutes of Health: Kidney Disease Research Funding and Priority Setting” lays out the inadequacies of federally funded research for kidney diseases in the face of a staggering burden on patients and taxpayers.

Working with a bipartisan group of legislators to request the GAO report, ASN is now using it to advocate for greater congressional funding for the National Institutes of Health, including dedicated “Special Kidney Program” research funds of $150 million per year for 10 years.

**ACA Repeal, NIH Funding, and Executive Orders**

To advocate for kidney patients and professionals, ASN kept a close watch on congressional efforts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act and informed ASN members of important milestones. ASN also independently and jointly with other organizations sought increases in National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding and opposed the Executive Order on Immigration that banned travel from six majority-Muslim countries.

ASN used its set of Guiding Principles on Healthcare Reform to evaluate all proposals advanced in Congress this year. In its request for a $2 billion increase in NIH funding, ASN included a proportional increase for the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). ASN aimed to protect the free flow of science and information in support of an open global society in opposing the travel ban.

**ASN, ERA-EDTA, and ISN Collaboration**

June 1, 2017, marked the one-year anniversary of the Declaration of Collaboration signed by ASN, the European Renal Association—Renal Dialysis and Transplant Association (ERA-EDTA), and the International Society of Nephrology (ISN). The societies also created a Universal Lexicon for Terminology to facilitate collaboration and understanding.

To improve the standard of care for kidney patients worldwide, the societies are currently collaborating in three areas: using high-impact data to communicate the kidney disease pandemic, comparing realities across the global nephrology workforce, and prioritizing ethical issues confronting nephrologists around the world.

**WIN-ASN Career Advancement Webinars Available Online**

Women in Nephrology (WIN) and ASN launched free professional advancement webinars that offer advice on directing or adjusting career pathways and negotiating to advance career goals. The webinars offer real-world advice from successful nephrologists and an expert in negotiating for career development with the aim of helping individuals make a difference in the lives of people with kidney diseases.

Topics include Career Choices in Nephrology: Am I on the Right Path?, How to Get Promoted, and Negotiating for Leadership Success. Access the webinars at www.asn-online.org/education/distancelearning/webinars/.

**Expanded Journal Offerings**

JASN and CJASN introduced visual abstracts and Perspectives to enhance the journals’ appeal to authors and readers. Josephine P. Briggs, MD, was named Editor-in-Chief of JASN, and under her leadership, the journal will begin publishing significance statements to explain the relevance of each paper’s findings to a broad readership.

Besides increasing the number of podcasts, CJASN, under the leadership of Editor-in-Chief Rajnish Mehrotra, MD, FASN, will continue to publish high quality clinical kidney research in areas such as AKI and ICU nephrology, hypertension, and transplantation.

**Twitter Chats on Kidney Controversies**

The increasingly popular #AskASN Twitter chats hosted by ASN and the Nephrology Journal Club (NephJC) delved into controversies in kidney care: Anticoagulation in Dialysis, Atrial Fibrillation in ESRD, and Preeclampsia and sFlt-1. Other topics included chats with ASN President Eleanor Lederer, MD, FASN, CJASN Editor-in-Chief Rajnish Mehrotra, MBBS, MD, FASN, and the winners of the 2016 ASN Innovations in Kidney Education Contest.

**ASN Communities, Social Media**

Every day, ASN Communities allow thousands of kidney health professionals to network, collaborate, and discuss issues facing the specialty on an online platform. ASN members from around the world composed approximately 12,000 posts across 13 communities led by 42 community leaders. Six new interest-based communities opened, providing venues for focused discussion on issues from public policy to women’s health.

ASN’s social media platforms show continued growth. Twitter followers for @ASNkidney grew by 20%, and followers of ASN’s Facebook page grew by 53%. Steady growth was also seen for @ASNadvocacy and @KidneyNews. ASN’s social media users are mostly from the United States, the United Kingdom, Mexico, Canada, Spain, and India.

**Innovation and Discovery Task Force**

ASN launched the Innovation and Discovery Task Force. Chaired by S. Ananth Karumanchi, MD, the task force is charged with developing a recommendation for ASN to meet the second goal of its Strategic Plan: “Transform kidney research through discovery and innovation to prevent, treat, and cure kidney diseases.” To meet its goals, the task force has assessed the current activities of ASN focused on fostering innovation, discovery, and research as well as studied the efforts of peer medical societies, patient organizations, foundations, and other exceptional innovators.

The task force identified the need to support and develop future innovators, communicate and educate clinicians regarding breakthrough treatments and approaches, and identify innovative mechanisms and funding sources to generate evidence for and success of cutting edge clinical research to prevent, treat, and cure kidney diseases.

**ASN Expands Minority Research Award**

The ASN-Harold Amos Medical Faculty Development Program (AMFDP) Award, formed in partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, was expanded to include two scholars during any given award cycle. Aiming to address the shortage of minority scholars with academic and research appointments in nephrology, the ASN-AMFDP program offers four-year post-doctoral research awards.

The first ASN-AMFDP recipient, Gentzon Hall, MD, PhD, of Duke University School of Medicine, has a research focus on novel gene discovery in African American women with familial focal segmental glomerulosclerosis. Applications will open again during 2018 for a second scholar.
ASN Outreach at Student National Medical Association (SNMA)

ASN exhibited at the SNMA Annual Meeting in Atlanta, GA, and enrolled more than 60 students for ASN membership. ASN Diversity and Inclusion Committee members Robert S. Hoover, Jr., MD, FASN, and Dinitrri A. Augustine, MD, attended the meeting and invited several Emory University faculty members and local practicing nephrologists to speak to students at the ASN booth.

ASN also hosted a reception attended by more than 100 students. The outreach is part of an initiative by the diversity and inclusion committee to increase interest in nephrology careers among students from backgrounds underrepresented in medicine.

Membership Satisfaction, Growth

ASN membership is more than 17,000, an increase over the previous year. Approximately 40% of members now come from outside the United States.

A survey of members asked for input on the value of ASN membership and benefits. More than 90% of respondents said ASN is a primary and reliable source for information on nephrology. One-half cited the ability to stay current about clinical information, trends, and regulatory changes in nephrology, as well as ASN publications, as primary reasons for joining and renewing membership. Members also identified conferences and events and the ability to network with one another as top benefits. When asked what they value most about ASN, members emphasized the credibility ASN provides within the profession.

Goal 4—Foster career development for current and future kidney health professionals

Securing the Future Campaign

The ASN Foundation for Kidney Research received a $1 million contribution from Keryx Biopharmaceuticals, Inc., to establish the Joseph V. Bonventre Career Development Grant, awarded every other year starting in 2018.

The Foundation’s Securing the Future Campaign aims to endow the Career Development Grants Program, which has awarded $31,500,000 in support of talented investigators transitioning to independent research careers since 1996.

Nephrology Workforce Research, Data Efforts

Now in its second year, the ASN Data Analytics Program collaborated on multiple projects assessing educational needs in nephrology fellowship and factors influencing specialty choice. Initial data on Internal Medicine Residencies from the Best Practices Project will be presented at ASN Kidney Week 2017.

The program oversees the joint Comparing Realities Across the Global Nephrology Workforce project, a collaboration among ASN, ERA-EDTA, and ISN researchers to assess how nephrology practice varies across the world. ASN’s new Nephrology GME Database allows researchers to monitor trends in the nephrology training landscape. A new Early Practice Survey targeted nephrologists 2 to 5 years out of fellowship training, providing a complement to the annual Nephrology Fellow Survey.

ASN Flash Polls assessed current perceptions about nephrology procedures among training program directors and division chiefs, informing discussions at this year’s Nephrology Training Program Retreat. ASN will soon launch the ASN Data Resource Center, a dedicated online platform for ongoing nephrology workforce research.

ASN Launches Kidney TREKS in Chicago

To help spur interest in nephrology among trainees, ASN added a new site to the Kidney TREKS (Tutored Research and Education for Kidney Scholars) program. Now offered at both the University of Chicago and Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory in Maine, Kidney TREKS offers selected medical students and PhD candidates a chance to explore nephrology through a weeklong kidney research and outreach course, long-term mentorship program, and opportunities for continued participation with ASN.

A preliminary assessment of the Kidney TREKS program found that among 48 participants for whom follow-up data were available, almost half had entered a pipeline specialty leading to nephrology (internal medicine, pediatrics, or medicine-pediatrics) or were conducting research in the kidney space. Of 40 medical student participants, 40% entered a relevant pipeline, and 78% of the researchers (graduate students, PhD candidates, and postdoctoral fellows) had published kidney-focused research.

ASN Travel Support

ASN provided students and trainees with four opportunities to attend Kidney Week 2017: the Advances in Research Conference (ARC) Early Program, the Karen L. Campbell, PhD, Travel Support Program for Fellows, the Kidney STARS (Students and Residents) Program, and the William E. Mitch, III, MD, FASN, International Scholars Travel Support Program.

A total of 389 students and trainees will participate in these travel support programs, including 260 Kidney STARS, 77 Campbell Fellows, 35 ARC Early Program attendees, and eight Mitch International Scholars.

Goal 5—Assert the value of nephrology to health and science professionals, health care systems, and other stakeholders to ensure high-quality care for patients

Nephrologists Transforming Dialysis Safety (NTDS)

The mission of ASN’s partnership with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is to engage nephrologists as team leaders to target zero infections in dialysis facilities. NTDS developed strategies to enhance implementation of recommended infection prevention practices within the nephrology community.

Through a series of community meetings and focus group sessions, NTDS identified infection control challenges, barriers and opportunities to improve infection prevention practices, as well as methods for early detection and proper treatment of hospital infections in patients undergoing dialysis. NTDS also used a needs assessment to develop the 2017 Roadmap that guides its work.

NTDS launched an educational webinar series with the first webinar entitled, “Targeting Zero Infections: Where Do We Begin?” The webinar addressed the virulence of hepatitis C and the role of the nephrologist as a leader in combating its spread. Webinar participants were directed to the online resource library, a key feature of the NTDS website. Six other webinars and educational offerings at ASN Kidney Week will follow.

A Voice on Capitol Hill

ASN partnered with 21 other health care organizations to advocate for kidney patients and professionals on Capitol Hill. Advocates met with lawmakers to urge dedicated kidney research funding for NIH of $150 million per year for 10 years and for passage of the Living Donor Protection Act on Kidney Health Advocacy Day in March and Kidney Community Advocacy Day in September.

Disaster Relief Efforts for Kidney Patients

To help provide continuity of care for displaced dialysis patients in need of treatment, ASN reacted swiftly following Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. ASN joined efforts by the American Kidney Fund (AKF), the Kidney Community Emergency Response Coalition, dialysis organizations, and other stakeholders to help kidney patients in the aftermath of these natural disasters.

ASN donated $20,000 to the relief efforts for dialysis patients coordinated by AKF to help replace medication, provide transportation to dialysis treatment, and cover household and food essentials. ASN also encouraged interested members to contribute to the AKF’s Disaster Relief Program.

Have a tip or idea you’d like to share with your fellow peers and the broader kidney community?

Send your idea to the Kidney News Fellows Corner column at kidneynews@asn-online.org.