

The Honorable Howard L. Berman
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Berman:

On behalf of the organ donation and transplant communities, the following members of the Immunosuppressive Drugs Coverage Coalition respectfully request that you become an original cosponsor of Representative Camp's upcoming legislation to help kidney transplant recipients reduce the possibility of organ rejection. **You were a cosponsor of similar legislation in the 109th Congress that would extend Medicare Part B coverage of immunosuppressive medications.**

Regardless of age, most individuals with end stage renal disease (ESRD) are entitled to Medicare coverage for dialysis or transplantation. Dialysis coverage is not subject to a time limit; however, Medicare immunosuppressive drug coverage applies only for 36 months post transplant unless the kidney recipient is eligible for Medicare due to age or disability (SSDI). Many kidney recipients must find other sources of coverage for the medications that are necessary to maintain the organ and its function. This discourages many dialysis patients from considering a transplant. The legislation would extend Medicare Part B for coverage of immunosuppressive medications only; no other Medicare benefits would be provided beyond three years post transplant. Medicare would be the secondary payer after this period, so individuals who have group health coverage with this benefit would continue to receive it through their group plan.

Since Medicare covers the cost of the transplantation for ESRD beneficiaries, it only makes sense for Medicare to preserve its investment by providing lifetime coverage of the anti-rejection medication necessary to maintain the organ. Without maintaining the organ, Medicare is faced with the additional cost of re-transplantation or costly dialysis, which is much more costly per year per patient than immunosuppressive medications.

We appreciate your consideration of this legislation. Please contact Brian Sutter at 225-3561 in Representative Camp's office to cosponsor or if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

American Association of Kidney Patients
American Kidney Fund
American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
American Society of Transplantation
American Society of Transplant Surgeons
Association of Organ Procurement Organizations
NATCO, The Organization for Transplant Professionals
National Kidney Foundation
PKD Foundation
Renal Physicians Association
Transplant Recipients International Organization
United Network for Organ Sharing