

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 27, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,
Education and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,
Education and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

As you prepare the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) Appropriations bill, we respectfully request the subcommittee continue its bipartisan commitment to the millions of Americans living with kidney diseases by including a \$25 million investment in KidneyX to build upon the success of prior KidneyX prize competitions and speed the development of the world's first artificial kidney.

KidneyX is a public-private partnership between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) to accelerate innovation in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of kidney diseases. KidneyX is incentivizing innovators to fill unmet patient needs through a series of prize competitions, de-risking the commercialization process by fostering coordination among federal agencies and creating a sense of urgency on behalf of patients and families.

More than 37 million Americans are living with kidney diseases, which for nearly 800,000 Americans has already progressed to kidney failure, a life-threatening condition for which there is no cure. This under-recognized epidemic disproportionately affects communities of color. For instance, Black Americans comprise 13 percent of the U.S. population but represent 33 percent of Americans living on dialysis, the most common therapy for kidney failure. Dialysis, while an important tool to mitigate kidney failure, has outcomes worse than most cancers: 50 percent of people starting dialysis today will die within 5 years.

The COVID-19 pandemic is especially deadly for kidney patients. Americans with kidney diseases are the most at risk among Medicare beneficiaries for severe outcomes from COVID-19—including hospitalization and death—and COVID-19 damages the kidneys of 30 percent of all hospitalized COVID-19 patients, even those without a prior history of kidney diseases.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Medicare dedicated nearly \$125 billion, or 24 percent of all traditional Medicare fee-for-service spending, to the care of all kidney diseases, including more than \$37 billion, or 7 percent of Medicare fee-for-service spending, to manage kidney failure alone. These costs do not include expenditures from Medicare Advantage or non-Medicare plans, which together cover 62 percent of people with kidney failure. Relative to other chronic diseases with comparable federal spending and disease burden, people with kidney diseases have had a

lack of innovation in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of kidney diseases. However, KidneyX is attracting a new generation of innovators and investors and transforming kidney care giving hope to countless patients.

A bipartisan achievement, KidneyX was first unveiled as a concept at the 2016 Obama White House Organ Summit and was a central pillar of President Donald J. Trump's July 2019 Executive Order on Advancing American Kidney Health. The private sector, led by ASN, has already committed \$25 million to support this effort and is committed to matching public funding.

To date, KidneyX has provided more than 65 awards to innovators across 5 prize competitions for solutions ranging from patient-developed solutions to improve quality of life such as dialysis accessible clothing, to cutting-edge innovations such as the artificial kidney and xenotransplantation. These innovations hold promise to provide better quality of life and improve access to care. Further, KidneyX is delivering on its pledge to catalyze private markets to invest in the advancement of kidney care. For instance, investors contributed more than \$300,000,000 to multiple winners of KidneyX's Redesign Dialysis competition after being highlighted at three Capital Market Days for Kidney Health hosted by ASN.

For KidneyX to meet its full potential and continue to foster the development of technologies such as a wearable or implantable artificial kidney, Congress must increase its support for KidneyX by including \$25 million for KidneyX in the FY 2023 LHHS appropriations bill. Congress has demonstrated its commitment to KidneyX by appropriating \$15 million for the program since FY 2020.

Including a full \$25 million for KidneyX in the FY 2023 LHHS appropriations bill would allow the program to expand its record of success and continue to drive innovation for people with kidney diseases. Currently, KidneyX is running Phase 2 of the Artificial Kidney Prize, which seeks to promote the integration and advancement of prototype bioartificial kidneys. Recent advances in regenerative medicine and xenotransplantation have demonstrated the promise innovation can bring to kidney health. With full funding, KidneyX can support additional innovators in the Artificial Kidney Prize competitions and run prizes in other priority areas, such as refining the diagnosis of kidney diseases –currently more than 90% of people with kidney diseases are unaware they have the condition– and developing tools to prevent kidney diseases altogether.

We respectfully request that the LHHS Subcommittee continue the commitment made to millions of Americans living with kidney diseases by appropriating \$25 million in FY 2023 for KidneyX.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



Larry Bucshon, M.D.
Member of Congress



Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



Elaine G. Luria
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
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Nydia M. Velázquez
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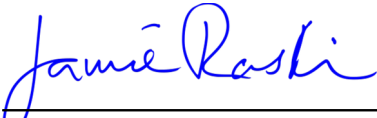
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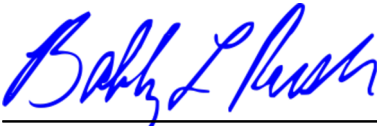
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Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress




Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
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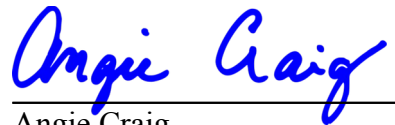
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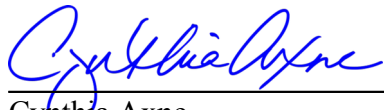
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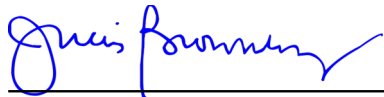
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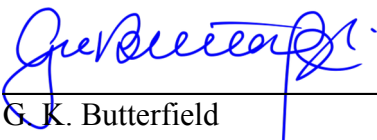
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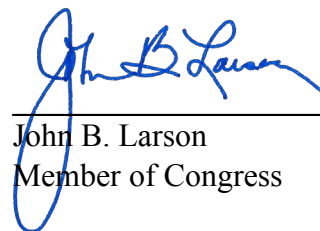
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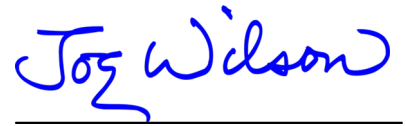
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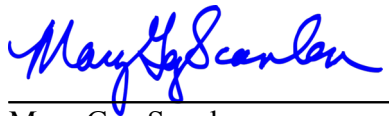
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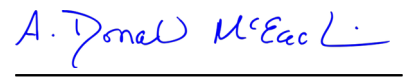
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Member of Congress



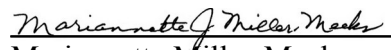
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