

November 13, 2013

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
U.S. Capitol, H-232
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House Minority Leader
235 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Boehner, Minority Leader Pelosi, Majority Leader Reid, and Republican Leader McConnell:

We are writing on behalf of the undersigned medical professional societies to thank both Chambers of Congress for working together to finalize passage of bi-partisan, life-saving, and cost effective legislation H.R. 698/S. 330, the "HIV Organ Policy Equity" (HOPE) Act.

We were very pleased to see the Senate pass the HOPE Act (S. 330) on June 17, 2013 by unanimous consent. Led by Senators Tom Coburn (R-OK) and Barbara Boxer (D-CA), the bill gained co-sponsorship from a diverse bi-partisan group of co-sponsors including Senators Paul (R-KY), Baldwin (D-WI), Enzi (R-WY), Warren (D-MA), Burr (R-NC), Landrieu (D-LA), Blunt (R-MO), Pryor (D-AR), Kirk (R-IL) and others. A month later, we were again pleased to watch the House Energy and Commerce committee pass the HOPE Act (H.R. 698) also by unanimous consent and with strong support from committee champions, Representatives Burgess (R-TX) and Capps (D-CA) as well as Representative Andy Harris, MD.

As medical and health professional societies, we have long been committed to policies that increase the pool of available organs for transplant. More than 8,000 people die each year waiting for a suitable organ to become available while, at the same time, the national waiting list for donor organs continues to grow. The HOPE Act would amend the Public Health Service Act to establish safeguards and standards of quality for research of organs infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and expand the supply of life-saving organs available for transplantation to the over 118,000 people on the national waiting list.

The HOPE Act would remove the 1988 ban on the use of HIV-positive organs for HIV-positive individuals in need of a donor organ. The current ban is simply not supportable in contemporary medicine and has been eclipsed in the last 25 years by significant advances in the treatment of HIV.

Furthermore, passage of this legislation will not only remove the ban and permit access to life-saving transplants; it will also allow the scientific and transplant community to conduct much needed research in this area.

We are grateful to you and to all of the bill's co-sponsors and supporters for coming together to pass this common-sense legislation that will improve the lives of many patients in need of organ transplants. We applaud your leadership and commitment and that of your staffs to ensuring that our laws reflect current medical science in efforts to advance organ donation and research and, most importantly, save lives.

Sincerely,

Joel Gallant, MD, FIDSA
Board Chair, HIV Medicine Association



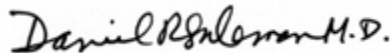
Sharon M. Moe, MD, FASN
President, American Society of Nephrology



Alan N. Langnas, D.O.
American Society of Transplant Surgeons



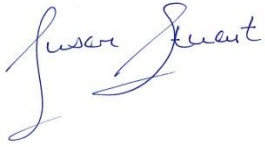
Daniel R. Salomon, M.D.
President, American Society of Transplantation



Robert T. Carroll, PhD(c), RN, ACRN
President, Association of Nurses in AIDS Care



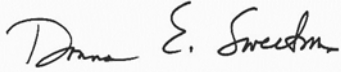
Susan Stuart, President
Association of Organ Procurement Organizations



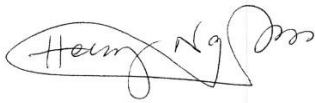
David A Reznik, DDS
President, HIV Dental Alliance



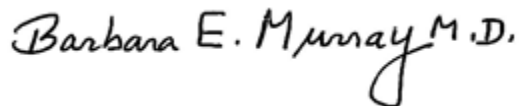
Donna Elaine Sweet, MD, MACP, AAHIVS
Chairperson, American Academy of HIV Medicine



Henry Ng, MD MPH
President, GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBT Equality



Barbara E. Murray, MD, FIDSA
President, Infectious Diseases Society of America



Carrie Lindower, RN, MBA, CPTC, CCTC
President, NATCO, The Organization for Transplant Professionals



cc:

House Co-Sponsors of H.R. 698

Senate Co-Sponsors of S. 330

The Honorable Fred Upton, Chair, House Energy and Commerce Committee

The Honorable Henry Waxman, Ranking Member, House Energy and Commerce Committee

The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chair, Senate HELP Committee

The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Ranking Member, Senate HELP Committee

The Honorable Eric Cantor, House Majority Leader

The Honorable Richard Durbin, Senate Majority Whip