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October 31, 2007

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
Committee on Finance
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Baucus and Grassley:

On behalf of the 20 million Americans with chronic kidney disease (CKD), including nearly 350,000 dialysis patients, the National Kidney Foundation respectfully requests that any Medicare legislation considered by the Senate include improvements to the Medicare end stage renal disease (ESRD) program.

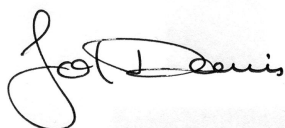
H.R. 3162, the Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act (CHAMP), as passed by the House, contained enhanced benefits for kidney patients. NKF understands the need for an offset in the current Pay-Go environment. Therefore, we reiterate NKF's longstanding decision to support extension of Medicare Secondary Payer, to 42 months, as proposed by the House, provided that the savings are dedicated to improvements to the Medicare ESRD program.

Of particular interest to NKF is Medicare coverage of educational sessions for beneficiaries with Stage 4 chronic kidney disease, to provide information on various options of renal replacement therapy, including modalities of dialysis and the possibility of kidney transplantation as well as information about the management of the additional medical conditions that accompany chronic kidney disease. However, the CHAMP Act does not authorize Medicare payment to dietitians and social workers for predialysis education services. We prefer the parallel provision in the free standing predialysis education bills in the Senate and House (S 432 and

HR 1245) and in the Kidney Care Quality and Education Act (S 691 and HR 1193). These professionals are an important part of the CKD health care team and we believe they should be eligible to bill Medicare for these services. We also support provisions that would establish demonstration projects to increase CKD awareness, surveillance and research and a provision that dialysis technicians be certified within 12 months after training. We also believe the study required in HR 3162 on possible barriers to broader utilization of home dialysis therapies should be included in the Senate Medicare package.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Davis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

John Davis, CEO

cc: Senate Finance Committee Members