National Renal Administrators Association Urges HHS Secretary Azar to Ensure Dialysis Providers Receive COVID-19 Relief Funding

Mt. Royal, NJ: In response to the announcement of new funding made available by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the National Renal Administrators Association (NRAA) submitted a letter to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Azar urging for dialysis providers to receive and be prioritized in the disbursement of the resources they need to safely care for patients with severe kidney disease on dialysis.

On March 27, 2020, the Trump Administration signed into law the CARES Act, which provides critical support and assistance for healthcare providers on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NRAA appreciates and welcomes the availability of these new resources to help healthcare providers on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as HHS implements this important legislation, NRAA asks to prioritize dialysis providers caring for the more than 450,000 Americans with end-stage renal disease (ESRD) on dialysis across the U.S. in the disbursement of funds from the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund and the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG). Financial assistance from both funds is available to all healthcare providers and it is critical that dialysis facilities can access this funding to safely treat the especially vulnerable ESRD patient population.

It is critical that HHS prioritize the disbursement of funding to dialysis providers, who serve more than 450,000 dialysis patients who are at a particularly high risk for COVID-19 exposure due to their overall medical complexity and the frequency of their life-sustaining dialysis treatment.

Dialysis providers simply do not have the resources necessary to pay for the substantial and unprecedented surge in costs to deliver treatment to patients during the pandemic. Incurred costs that are expressly eligible for reimbursement under these funds include:

- Significant cost increases for medical equipment
- Supplies like PPE
- Telehealth and home dialysis equipment
- New construction and retrofitting of facilities
- Additional staff and training with extended hours and hazard pay
- Childcare for staff caring for patients

We urge the Administration and Congress to work together to make more funding available to healthcare providers as quickly as possible and prioritize the disbursement of funding to dialysis providers during this unprecedented public health crisis to combat the spread of this virus.

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NRAA is a voluntary organization representing dialysis providers throughout the United States. Since 1977, the association has supported independent and community-based dialysis providers to build a stronger community. NRAA fulfills its mission through education, advocacy and services that support excellence in renal healthcare. For more information, visit www.nraa.org