

# U.S. Rep. Kind: Bipartisan legislation to help kidney transplant patients passes committee

Posted on Thursday, Jul 16, 2020

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**Washington, DC**— Today, bipartisan legislation introduced by **Reps. Ron Kind (D-WI) and Michael C. Burgess, M.D. (R-TX)** that would improve coverage under Medicare for immunosuppressive drugs for kidney transplant patients passed the **House Committee on Energy and Commerce**. This legislation now moves onto consideration by the full House of Representatives.

“I’m glad that today we took a step closer to providing kidney transplant patients with the support and peace of mind they deserve,” said **Rep. Ron Kind**. “After a transplant surgery, the last thing patients and their families should have to worry about is whether or not they can afford the lifesaving drugs needed to prevent organ rejection. It’s critical that we work together to lower costs for these patients, and reduce the need for future dialysis.”

“This legislation is vital for kidney patients just like me,” said **Mary Baliker, a Wisconsin kidney transplant recipient and patient advocate**. “Despite having good health insurance and working for a hospital, I still went into tens of thousands of dollars’ worth of debt to pay for my immunosuppressant drugs when my Medicare coverage ran out. I was straight out of college and had no choice but to purchase my lifesaving drugs with credit card after credit card. I am thankful for the new legislation. We must change this now.”

Currently, individuals eligible for Medicare due to permanent kidney failure lose their immunosuppressive drug coverage 36 months after transplant, which can lead to patients not being able to afford their medication and subsequent organ rejection. This legislation would permanently remove the 36-month limit and extend Medicare coverage of immunosuppressive drugs for kidney transplant patients with no other coverage. Additionally, this policy would result in [substantial Medicare savings](#) by ensuring patients can afford the medicine they need to prevent organ rejection or a return to dialysis.

Rep. Kind serves on the Subcommittee on Health for the Ways and Means Committee, the most powerful – and the oldest – committee in the House of Representatives. It has jurisdiction over tax measures, the management of public debt, trade and tariff laws, Social Security, Medicare, pensions, and many other economic growth measures.

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