

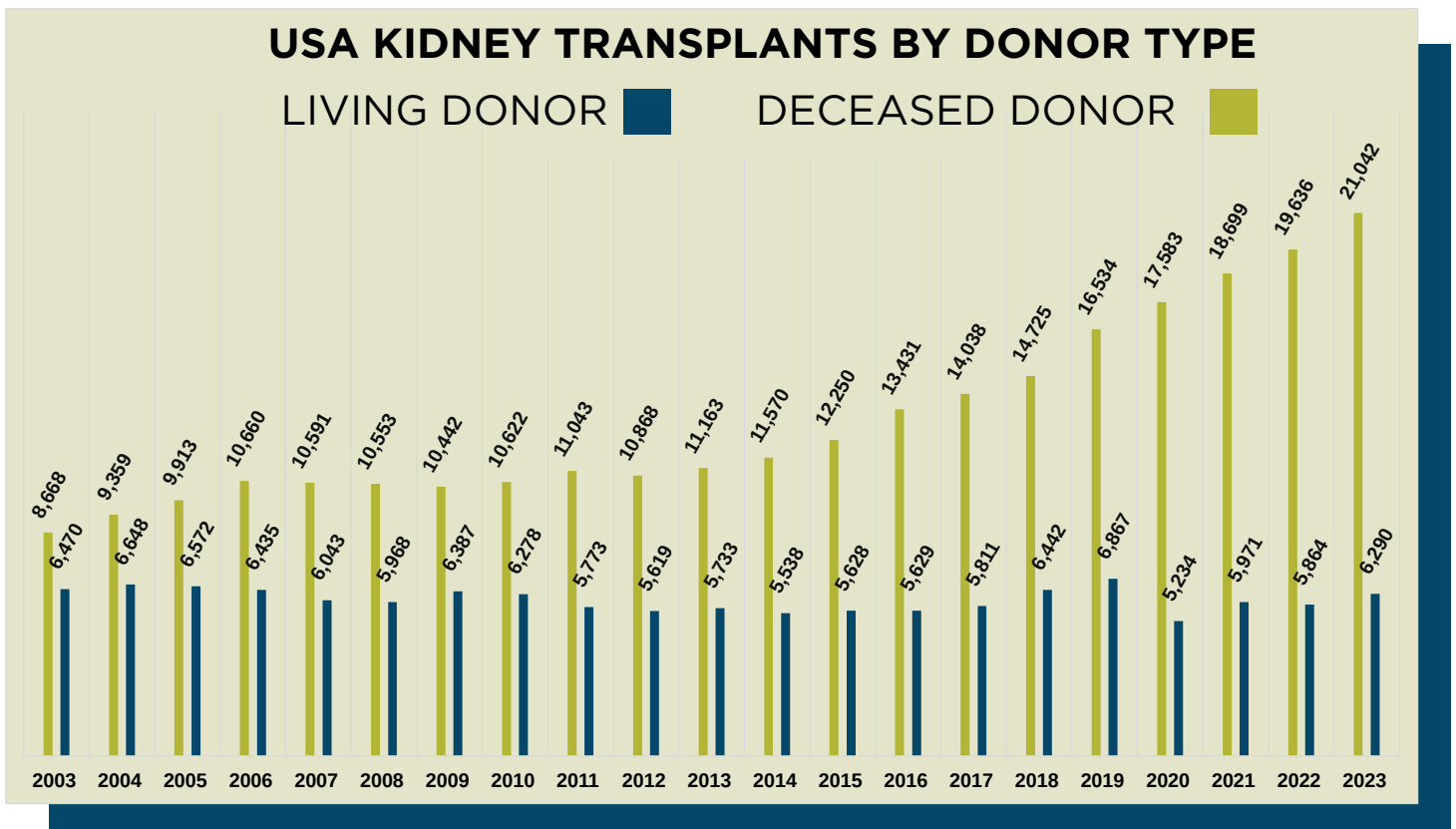
CONGRESS SHOULD ENACT THE LIVING ORGAN VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT (LOVE) ACT

THE ISSUE: As of 2023, there are approximately 88,500 Americans waiting for a kidney transplant, with tens of thousands more in need of a transplant but not yet on the waiting list. The average wait is 3-5 years, and 12-17 persons die each day waiting for a kidney transplant. The waiting list is growing faster than organs from deceased donors are becoming available. While more needs to be done to improve kidney recovery from deceased donors, the gap can be closed even faster if living donations increase. And, increasing donations has been documented to save the federal government significant funds.

Living kidney donation is safe, ethical, and has been effective for decades. Yet, while deceased donation has more than doubled in ten years, the number of living donations has not increased in twenty years. As of February 2024, living donation rates remain below historical averages.

Living kidney donation lacks meaningful federal support. While several non-profits and dozens of transplant centers are doing impressive work, minimal federal resources are available to support individuals in need of a donation from a living donor, and to support individuals who volunteer to donate a kidney and save a life.

Legislation is needed to build a comprehensive national living organ donor support system consisting of three building blocks. First, Congress needs to authorize kidney transplant navigators for both transplant recipients and donors, building on the new Medicare “patient illness navigator” program. Second, Congress needs to clarify that living donors are entitled to appropriate cost reimbursement, building on existing law that already instructs Medicare to cover all “reasonable expenses” for living donors. And third, a national living donor education program should be adopted. By doing so, Congress will not only save lives, but save significant costs for the Medicare program.



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