



**National  
Living  
Donor  
Assistance  
Center**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Organ Transplantation: Government Funded Program Reduces Financial Disincentives**

Arlington, VA – October 17, 2007, the American Society of Transplant Surgeons (ASTS) and the University of Michigan (UM) launched the National Living Donor Assistance Center (NLDAC) to lessen the burden of travel and subsistence expenses toward living organ donation. The NLDAC was established as a nationwide system to provide reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses to living donors. Priority will be given to individuals who cannot otherwise afford the expenses.

“Many individuals may desire to become living donors for family or acquaintances, but lack the necessary resources to cover expenses not covered by insurance. The costs of being a donor can represent a substantial financial burden on the parties involved; for some, non-reimbursed expenses may make living donations impossible,” said Program Director Akinlolu Ojo, MD, PhD, Professor of Medicine at the University of Michigan.

The Division of Transplantation, Health Resources and Services Administration anticipates providing \$8 million over four years to provide reimbursement to eligible donors. The authorizing legislation provides that funds made available through this grant program may not be made available to donating individuals when payment for such expenses has been made, or can reasonably be expected to be made: 1) under any State compensation program, under an insurance policy, or under any Federal or State health benefits program; 2) by an entity that provides health services on a prepaid basis; or 3) by the recipient of the organ. The Program provides an exception to this rule for documented financial hardships.

In response to public solicitation of comments, a threshold of income eligibility for the recipient of the organ is 300 percent of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Poverty Guidelines in effect at the time of the eligibility determination. The Program assumes that recipients whose income exceeds this level will have the ability to reimburse the living organ donor for the travel and subsistence expenses and any other qualifying expenses that can be authorized by the Secretary of HHS. The total Federal reimbursement for qualified expenses during the donation process for the donor and accompanying individuals is capped at \$6,000.00.

“Living Kidney, Liver, Lung and Intestine Transplant programs have been invited to register for the Program and will submit applications on behalf of prospective donors, said NLDAC Manager, Katrina Crist, MBA, Executive Director with the American Society of Transplant Surgeons. “Approved funds will be made available through a controlled value card that works just like a credit card and provides a mechanism to monitor use of the funds.”

This program is administered by the Division of Transplantation (DoT), Healthcare Systems Bureau (HSB), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), United States Health and Human Services (HHS) through a cooperative agreement with the University of Michigan (UM) and the American Society of Transplant Surgeons (ASTS). Section 3 of the Organ Donation and Recovery Improvement Act (ODRIA), 42 U.S.C. 274f, establishes the authority and legislative parameters to provide reimbursement for travel and subsistence expenses incurred toward living organ donation.

For more information please visit the National Living Donor Assistance Center (NLDAC) website at [www.livingdonorassistance.org](http://www.livingdonorassistance.org).

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