

### Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/asn-action-center/recapping-asn-key-takeaways-from-kidney-week-2021/13092/>

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### Recapping ASN: Key Takeaways from Kidney Week 2021

Announcer:

Welcome to the *ASN Action Center* on ReachMD. On this episode, we're joined by Dr. John Friedewald, a Professor of Medicine and Surgery at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and the Medical Director of Kidney and Pancreas Transplantation at Northwestern Memorial Hospital. Dr. Friedewald is here to share the hottest topics from the American Society of Nephrology Kidney Week 2021. Here's Dr. Friedewald now.

Dr. Friedewald:

I think that there was a lot of energy coming out of Kidney Week, which is exciting. I think we saw a number of hot clinical trials that are releasing their results that were published in the *New England Journal* coincident with the Kidney Week meeting, and we now have some therapies that were initially designed for treating people with diabetes that are having big impacts on kidney disease progression and the longevity of people with kidney disease, and so we're very excited to have some new therapeutics that we think can really help. So I think that was one big takeaway is that we have some new tools that can really change and move the needle in terms of helping people with kidney disease. That's number one. Number two, I think was a call to arms from our president Sue Quaggin, who told us all that really now is the time to not only recognize kidney disease as a global pandemic, but also to take action and treat it. And so I think there's a lot of excitement and activity now in terms of a groundswell of activism for treating people with kidney disease, recognizing kidney disease, and making a difference in people's lives. So I think that was my big takeaway from the meeting. It had a different energy, and it's funny because it wasn't an in-person meeting. It was a virtual meeting, but yet, I feel like it had some of the best energy from any of the meetings we've had in recent memory. So it was great.

We saw some great sessions on kidney transplantation, in particular, in regards to organ allocation and policy. And what we've seen is there was a big change in kidney allocation policy in the last six months, which tried to alleviate what have been significant inequities and geographic disparities between access to kidney transplantation. And so far, we saw some early outcomes that the first six months are moving things in the right direction, so people that were disadvantaged based on where they lived are getting better access to kidney transplants now. So that's great news.

We also learned though that we can do better in terms of the performance of what are called OPO's – organ procurement organizations – and there's been a real call-to-arms for that, both from the federal government in terms of how they're monitoring OPO's around the country, and there are currently more than 50 OPO's in the U.S. that procure organs and then allocate them for transplant through the system. So I think number one is making more organs available. Number two, making sure they're distributed in an equitable fashion. And I think we heard from a number of fantastic speakers, including Dr. Boulware, who reminded us that there is still significant inequities in terms of access to organ transplantation. I think the takeaways for me were number one, inclusivity is important from the get-go, and what I mean by that is having the right voices at the table when policy is made lead to inclusive policies and equitable policies. And so I think that although UNOS has tried to pay attention to this over the years, I think we can do better in terms of having the right voices there at the policy-making step so that then when these policies are enacted, they can have the best and most equitable effect on all the people needing a transplant. And so I was happy to hear all the talks in our session. I think they were fantastic, and we have some good news in a way that the new policy is starting to equalize geographic disparities. I think we have a long way to go with both gender and race-based equity, and we heard about that from Dr. Boulware. So a lot to take home from that meeting.

Announcer:

That was Dr. John Friedewald, discussing the highlights from the American Society of Nephrology Kidney Week 2021. To access this and other episodes in our series, visit [ReachMD.com/ASN](https://ReachMD.com/ASN), where you can Be Part of the Knowledge. Thanks for listening.