



National  
Living  
Donor  
Assistance  
Center

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Organ Transplantation: Funding Renewed -Government Funded Program to Reduce Financial Disincentives**

Arlington, VA – July 26, 2010, The National Living Donor Assistance Center (NLDAC), a Federally funded program launched in 2007 to lessen the burden of travel and subsistence expenses toward living organ donation, has received renewed funding and will continue to operate until 2014. Funding for the Program was due to expire August 31, 2010. The grant application submitted by the University of Michigan in partnership with the American Society of Transplant Surgeons (ASTS) was approved by the Division of Transplantation, Health Resources and Services Administration in late June and will provide up to \$2,000,000 yearly for four years. Priority is given to individuals who cannot otherwise afford the expenses.

“We are very happy to be able to continue the unique work of the NLDAC. Donors who participate in the Program are very grateful for the help and they have told us the Program is essential,” said Program Director, Akinlolu Ojo, MD, PhD, and Professor of Medicine at the University of Michigan.

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.

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 Program provides an exception to this funding threshold for documented financial hardships. The total Federal reimbursement for qualified expenses during the donation process for the donor and accompanying individuals is capped at \$6,000.

“Over the last three years, it has been exciting to see NLDAC become a key component of the living donation process across the U.S. 160 different transplant centers have submitted applications to NLDAC and we receive about 50 applications monthly,” said NLDAC Manager, Katrina Crist, MBA, and Executive Director of the ASTS.

Through July 26, 2010, NLDAC has received over 1200 applications since the Program was launched on October 17, 2007. Eighty-eight percent of the applications received have been approved for funding. The average expense for travel and lodging has been \$2,900 per application. Approved donors receive an American Express Controlled Value Card (CVC) to purchase airfare, gas, rental cars, hotel rooms, food and other incidental expenses such as parking. Funds are added or removed to the CVC as needed by NLDAC staff via a web-based program. NLDAC surveys reveal ninety-eight percent of donors who have participated in the Program would recommend NLDAC to other donors.

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.

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