

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2405

COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS

COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,
AND FORESTRY

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND
NATURAL RESOURCES

COMMITTEE ON
RULES AND
ADMINISTRATION

June 23, 2026

The Honorable Dr. Mehmet Oz
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, Maryland 21244

Dear Administrator Oz,

We write today in support of the Mississippi Organ Recovery Agency (MORA), our state's primary Organ Procurement Organization (OPO), and to express concern regarding the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Final Rule that will unintentionally disrupt the progress being made in organ donation and transplantation across our state and nationwide.

As you know, OPOs serve as the critical link between donor families, hospitals, and transplant centers, helping to honor the lifesaving gift of donation while supporting grieving families with compassion. Over the past 32 years, MORA has saved and improved countless lives through organ, eye, and tissue donation. It has fulfilled its mission by building sustained and strong partnerships with hospitals, donor families, healthcare professionals, and community organizations.

We fully support accountability and transparency within the organ donation and transplantation system. However, we are concerned that full implementation of the CMS Final Rule would destabilize established donation process in Mississippi, and potentially across the nation.

The current performance metrics, which CMS Final Rule would use to rank OPOs, focus solely on the outcome measures of donation and transplant rates without considering the process measures or the health realities of the communities that OPOs serve. This standard would disadvantage states like Mississippi, where heart disease is the leading cause of death, cancer is second, and chronic conditions like obesity, hypertension, and diabetes are widespread. These factors mean our donor populations are often more medically complex, which directly affects donor eligibility, organ quality, and transplant center utilization. In addition, another metric, the transplant rate, is not even within the control of the OPO, but rather based on decisions made by transplant surgeons.

At a time when more than 100,000 Americans remain on the national transplant waiting list, our collective focus should remain on strengthening collaboration, improving donation outcomes, and supporting high-performing organizations that are already delivering measurable results for patients and families.

MORA has demonstrated a strong commitment to innovation, donor family care, hospital development, and community education. These efforts have helped increase donation opportunities while maintaining the dignity and respect every donor and family deserves. Policies that could weaken local infrastructure or create uncertainty in long-standing healthcare partnerships risk undermining this important work.

We respectfully encourage CMS to carefully consider stakeholder feedback before implementing the Final Rule and to consider metrics which the OPO community is developing that use CMS' own measurement framework. These metrics are grounded in science and independently evaluated.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and for your continued commitment to improving the nation's transplant system. We appreciate the opportunity to advocate for the patients, donor families, and healthcare professionals who depend upon the success of organ donation programs every day.

Sincerely,



Cindy Hyde-Smith
United States Senator



Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator



Michael Guest
United States Representative