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January 16, 2013

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
United States Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Coburn, MD
United States Senate
172 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: HIVMA Endorsement of Your Legislation to Address HIV+ Organ Donation and Research

Dear Senator Boxer, Senator Coburn, and Congresswoman Capps:

The HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA) of the Infectious Diseases Society of America is pleased to endorse and strongly support your proposed legislation to reform a medically outdated federal ban on the use of organs from HIV-infected donors for recipients with HIV infection. HIVMA is the professional home of more than 5,000 physicians, scientists and other health care professionals who practice on the frontline of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

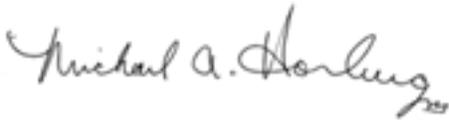
HIV infection is no longer a contraindication to solid organ transplantation, and transplantation can be the best clinical option for many patients with end-stage organ failure. However, a severe organ shortage in the United States leads to considerable mortality and morbidity for patients awaiting transplants. For transplant candidates infected with HIV, deceased donors with the same infection may represent a unique source of organs that researchers estimate could potentially save the lives of approximately 1,000 HIV-infected patients with liver and kidney failure each year. Unfortunately, the legal ban on HIV-infected organ donation presently prohibits scientific exploration of HIV-infected organ donation as a potentially lifesaving measure for people living with HIV infection.

We understand that your bill would update provisions of the National Organ Transplant Act (NOTA) to reflect the current medical understanding of HIV/AIDS, and appropriately vest authority for regulating HIV-infected organ donation with the Department of Health and Human Services. This change in policy is important to support medical progress and allow for the research necessary to fully evaluate HIV-infected organ donation to HIV-infected patients.

We applaud your leadership in introducing this life-saving measure that will increase access to transplantation for HIV-infected patients, reduce deaths while on the organ transplant waiting list, save Medicare \$500,000 per patient transplanted, and maintain provisions to protect the national supply of organs.

Thank you again for your leadership on this important legislation. We look forward to working with you to help build broad bi-partisan support for this bill in the House and Senate, and move it toward enactment. Please count on HIVMA as a resource, if we may be of any assistance. We can be reached through HIVMA's policy officer, Kimberly Miller, at kmiller@hivma.org or (703) 740-4957.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael A. Horberg".

Michael Horberg, MD, MAS, FIDSA
Chair, HIVMA Board of Directors