



December 17, 2021

The Unicode Consortium
P.O. Box 391476
Mountain View, CA 94039-1476

Dear Unicode Consortium:

On behalf of the American Society of Nephrology (ASN), thank you for this opportunity to recommend the creation of a kidney emoji to help represent the more than 850,000,000 people worldwide—including more than 37,000,000 in the United States—with kidney diseases.

Emojis are becoming an important part of mainstream dialogue and will continue to be incorporated into daily communication. There are more than 3,000 emojis in the Unicode Consortium, representing food, transportation, clothing, and many more important aspects of everyday life. However, only three medically and anatomically accurate emojis exist, representing the brain, heart, and lungs. No emoji exists for kidneys despite their vital role in health.

The more than 21,000 ASN members in 131 countries believe that a kidney emoji would greatly improve the quality of health care. A kidney emoji would also help to represent the 850,000,000 people worldwide who have kidney diseases. A medically and anatomically accurate kidney emoji could also help to achieve equity in health care around the world.

Creating an emoji representing the kidney would create opportunities for nephrologists and other health professionals to discuss concerns about kidney health—such as kidney pain, kidney stones, acute kidney injury, and kidney diseases—with their patients in an efficient and timely manner. An emoji allows for simplified communication that would assist doctors and nurses to discuss kidney concerns with all patients. With the current increase in the use of telehealth, emojis are more important than ever.

In the United States, 33% of the population is at risk for having kidney diseases and nine out of 10 adults with kidney diseases do not know they suffer from them. Increasing the ease to discuss and diagnose kidney diseases would allow for earlier intervention. In 2019, kidney diseases were the 10th leading cause of death worldwide and a kidney emoji would bring vital awareness to kidneys and the need for increased research and focus on kidney health. Every year, 100,000 people start dialysis in the United States, but the majority will die within five years, making earlier intervention a necessity.



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For these reasons, ASN supports the development of a kidney emoji. To discuss this letter, ASN's strong support for the development of a kidney emoji, or ASN, please contact me at 312-503-1534 or quaggin@northwestern.edu.

Sincerely,

Susan E. Quaggin, MD, FASN
President