

TAKE ACTION!

A Publication of the National Kidney Foundation of Kentucky

Spring 2008

March 19th is Kidney Day at the Capitol to Raise Awareness of Growing Problem of CKD

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a growing health problem in the U.S. The rate of CKD has grown more than 30% in the U.S., with more than 26 million people living with the disease. Since CKD in its early stages may have no prominent symptoms, most people with CKD have no idea they are affected until they are near kidney failure. Early detection and treatment of CKD is invaluable. If more people are made aware of their risk for developing such a devastating disease, more people will have the knowledge to take control of their health and lead healthier lives.

March is National Kidney Month and is the perfect time to educate ourselves about kidney disease and the importance of getting tested. It is also a time to educate our legislators about the importance of early identification and the growing public health concern CKD has become (*cont. on pg. 2*).

Celebrate Donate Life Month and Pledge to Give the Gift of Life



If you can't get it done today, it can wait until tomorrow. But for 98,000 Americans on the national waiting list for life-saving organ transplants, tomorrow may never come. According to the National Kidney Foundation, only one out of three on the waiting list will ever receive a transplant due to the critical shortage of organ donors in the U.S. In fact, seventeen people die each day while waiting. April is National Donate Life Month, and the foundation is asking all to consider signing up as organ donors during this time.

Give the gift of life by signing the
Kentucky Organ Donor Registry at
www.donatelifeky.org!



National Kidney
Foundation
of KENTUCKY

"Most people don't get associated with dialysis and kidney disease until they are directly affected by it. We need to get the word out about kidney prevention because it doesn't just affect the individual, it affects the whole family. If it wasn't for the woman who loved me and who didn't know me, I wouldn't be here today. She gave me 12 years of life and I am connected to her for the rest of my life."

Crystal Gant, dialysis patient who received a kidney transplant in 1982

Kidney Day at the Capitol (cont. from pg. 1)

That's why the National Kidney Foundation of Kentucky has set out to inform our state legislators about CKD and gain their support for an important initiative that can save lives and prevent more Kentuckians from reaching kidney failure. The Kentucky CKD Task Force resolution (HJR 74) calls for a state plan that promotes awareness about CKD and early testing that will aid in reducing the occurrence of end-stage renal disease (ESRD).

On March 19, 2008, the NKFK will travel to the state capitol to ask our state officials to support the CKD Task Force. And we need your help! Our legislators need to hear from kidney patients, professionals, and other supporters of the NKFK about the importance of early detection and treatment of kidney disease. A strong, unifying voice will show our state government that CKD is a major health concern and priority for Kentucky.

Show your support by joining us in Frankfort to raise awareness about kidney disease. The Day at the Capitol event will feature a rally in the rotunda with speaker and NKFK supporter Representative Mary Lou Marzian of Louisville. The event will also encourage legislators to support an act concerning live organ

donation. The act titled, "The Gift of Life" Act (SB 35), encourages state employees to become live donors by offering a tax credit to state employees who give this gift of life altruistically. The act is sponsored by Senator Julian Carroll after a state employee, Amy Covert, gave one of her kidneys to her friend, Kerri Cope, also a state employee.

You can learn more about these important initiatives by attending a People Like Us Empowerment Forum that will be held in both Lexington and Louisville. Check out the calendar on page 4 for dates and times. Contact the NKFK at 1-800-737-5433 for more information and to RSVP for the event.

Congressional Kidney Caucus Top Priority of NKF E-Advocacy Network

People Like Us Take Action Network is the NKF's most recent endeavor to strengthen support among our congressmen for kidney disease and organ transplantation legislation. The network allows patients, medical professionals, and friends of the NKF to contact their congressmen on issues that affect kidney patients, organ donors, and transplant recipients.

Through the network, members can send e-mails to local Congressmen that ask for their support for vital legislation. E-Advocacy members receive an action alert e-mail that gives updates on current legislation and provides a link to a letter of support that can be personalized and sent to Members of Congress.

Joining the NKF E-Advocacy Network is a simple way to strengthen support for kidney patients, transplant recipients and organ donors. Become an advocate by visiting www.kidney.org/takeaction. For more information, please contact the National Kidney Foundation of Kentucky at 502-585-5433 or 1-800-737-5433.

Contact Your Legislators!

Let them know that you support the CKD Task Force and Organ Donation!

- Contact your local legislators and ask them for their support of the CKD Task Force Resolution (HJR 74). *You can find your legislators and contact them by visiting www.lrc.ky.gov/Legislators.htm or by calling the Legislative Message Line at 1-800-372-7181.*
- The following Representatives need to hear from you! They are members of the Health and Welfare Committee and make important decisions concerning health policy in Kentucky:

Tom Burch, Brandon Spencer, David Watkins, John Arnold, Robert Damron, Joni Jenkins, Mary Lou Marzian, Darryl Owens, Ruth Ann Palumbo, Ansel Smith, Kathy Stein, Susan Westrom, Bob DeWeese, Scott Brinkman, James Comer, David Floyd, Addia Wuchner

Congressional Kidney Caucus

The Kidney Caucus was established to increase awareness of kidney disease among congressmen and build a strong base of support for initiatives concerning kidney disease. Currently, 63 of the 441 U.S. Representatives are members of the Kidney Caucus with no representation from Kentucky.

THREE SIMPLE TESTS YOU SHOULD ASK YOUR DOCTOR TO DO

One in eight adults have kidney disease and another 20 million are at increased risk for getting it and most don't know it. Kidney disease can be found and treated early to prevent more serious kidney disease and other complications.

The National Kidney Foundation recommends three simple tests to check for kidney disease.

- **Blood Pressure:** High blood pressure is the second most common cause of kidney disease. High blood pressure may also happen as a result of kidney disease. A blood pressure of 140/90 or higher is called high blood pressure. If you have diabetes or kidney disease a target less than 130/80 is recommended. Keeping blood pressure under control is important to lower risk of kidney disease, heart and blood vessel disease, and stroke.
- **Urinalysis.** A urinalysis is a test that checks a sample of your urine for the amount of protein, blood (red blood cells and white blood cells) and other things. Protein and red and white blood cells are not normally found in the urine, so having too much of any of these may mean kidney disease. Having protein in the urine is one of the earliest signs of kidney disease especially in people with diabetes. Several other tests can be done to check for protein in urine. One of the tests is called the protein to creatinine ratio. It is the most accurate way to measure protein in the urine. A value of 200 mg/gm or less per day is normal. A value higher than 200 mg/gm is too high. Another test, called the albumin to creatinine ratio, is good for people at increased risk for kidney disease—people with diabetes, high blood pressure, or family history of diabetes, high blood pressure or kidney disease. With either of these tests, you don't need to collect a 24-hour urine sample, which may be hard to collect.
- **Glomerular filtration rate (GFR).** GFR is estimated from results of a serum (or blood) creatinine test. The GFR tells how well your kidneys are working to remove wastes from your blood. It is the best way to check kidney function. A serum (or blood) creatinine test alone should not be used to check kidney function. GFR is calculated using the serum creatinine and other factors such as age and gender. In the early stages of kidney disease GFR may be normal (GFR decreases with age). A GFR number of less than 60 is low and may mean that you have kidney disease. Check with your doctor about having the GFR test (a GFR calculator can be found at NKF's website www.kidney.org/KLS).

If you are at increased risk for kidney disease (have diabetes, high blood pressure, or family history of diabetes, high blood pressure, or kidney disease), you should find out if you have kidney disease. Ask your doctor about these three simple tests. They should be done at least once a year so that if you have early kidney disease, it can be treated right away. Early kidney disease can and should be treated to keep it from getting worse!

If you have the risk factors for kidney disease, please attend a kidney health screening in your area. For more information, please contact the National Kidney Foundation of Kentucky at 1-800-737-5433. Article from the National Kidney Foundation

Did You Know?

- 630 Kentuckians are currently waiting for life saving organs; over 350 are waiting for a kidney.
- Approximately 74,366 patients are awaiting kidney transplants in the U.S. and more than 2,272 are waiting for kidney-pancreas transplants.
- At the end of 2005, there were 470,000 Americans receiving treatment for kidney failure (also called end stage renal disease, or ESRD). This included 336,000 dialysis patients and 136,000 with a functioning kidney transplant.

Data from the National Kidney Foundation and United Network of Organ Sharing (UNOS)

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Mark your Calendar! Kidney Month Activities

People Like Us, Live! Empowerment Forum: Learn more about the NKFK, exciting CKD legislative initiatives, and Kidney Day at the Capitol. *Lexington:* February 24, 2:00 p.m., Kentucky Blood Center, 3121 Belmont Centre Cir. *Louisville:* March 2, 2:00 p.m., Clifton Center, 2117 Payne St. Refreshments will be provided. Patients, professionals, and concerned citizens are all invited!! Call 1-800-737-5433 to RSVP for the event.

Kidney Day at the Capitol: The NKFK and supporters will rally at the capitol and seek support from our state legislators for CKD and organ donation initiatives. Frankfort, March 19, 12:30 p.m. Call the NKFK for more information.

KEEP Screening: Free kidney health screening for those at increased risk of developing kidney disease. *Louisville:* March 15, Louisville Metro Department of Public Health & Wellness. *Paducah:* March 29th at Mt. Mariah Baptist Church. *Georgetown:* April 15 & 16, Scott County Extension Office. *Bowling Green:* April 29, Medical Center Health & Wellness Center

Gift of Life Gala: March 8, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Downtown Louisville. Celebrates the NKFK's 40th Anniversary and founders. Music by Beatles tribute band, Eight Days a Week.

Krazy for Kidneys: A support group for patients and their families. 2nd Thursday every month. Call for information.