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ASN Leading the Fight To Improve First-Year Dialysis Survival

ASN champions the PEAK Campaign to emphasize national quality improvement in kidney care through community-wide efforts in partnership with Kidney Care Partners

Washington, DC (Monday, June 15, 2009) — As an active member of the Kidney Care Partners (KCP) coalition, the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) is pleased to announce and endorse the coalition's new quality campaign, PEAK, "Performance Excellence and Accountability in Kidney Care," created to improve the first-year survival rates of dialysis patients. ASN, in partnership with fellow members of KCP, has pledged to reduce the mortality rate among first-year dialysis patients by 20 percent by the end of 2012.

Led by ASN and other members of KCP, with support from research partners at Brown University and Quality Partners of Rhode Island, as well as experts in the kidney community, the PEAK Campaign will equip health care providers and professionals with tools to help first-year dialysis patients better understand their disease and manage the effects of dialysis on themselves and their families. ASN believes PEAK will not only improve and extend the lives of people with kidney failure but also reduce patient hospitalizations and lower Medicare costs.

The PEAK Campaign targets the overall health of dialysis patients in the first year. Research shows that increased emphasis on nutrition, infection prevention, and anemia management can improve survival and will also likely reduce hospitalizations and lower Medicare costs overall.

"We applaud this effort to reach out to and educate dialysis patients in their first year," said Thomas Coffman, MD, FASN, President of ASN. "As physicians, our members have always focused on high quality patient care, and we look forward to working with KCP to help patients transition to dialysis and improve outcomes. We feel fortunate to be a member of KCP and actively participate in joint efforts to improve patient care."

Kidney disease affects more than 26 million people nationwide, and the number of Americans with kidney disease is rising steadily due to risk factors including diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and high blood pressure. Approximately 400,000 Americans suffer from kidney failure and must undergo dialysis or kidney transplantation. Transplants are limited due to the shortage of donor organs, so most patients undergo three-to-four-hour dialysis treatments three times a week.

Often, the onset of chronic kidney disease (CKD) is gradual and undetected, leaving patients especially vulnerable by the time the disease is recognized. Helping patients to understand their disease and manage it is an essential ingredient to high quality care for newly diagnosed patients and a central component of the PEAK Campaign.

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