



PRESS RELEASE

New Kidney Health Alliance Elevates Chronic Kidney Disease on Global Health Agenda

WASHINGTON — Seventeen patient advocacy organizations from North and South America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East have formed the Global Patient Alliance for Kidney Health. The Alliance aims to elevate patient voices and advocate for policies that enhance access to screening and early treatment of chronic kidney disease or CKD.

Chronic kidney disease is one of the most neglected public health crises of our time.

Globally, CKD affects nearly 850 million people¹. However, patients often go undiagnosed. About 90% of CKD patients are unaware of their status. This can have dire consequences: CKD is incurable, and when left unmanaged, it can lead to kidney failure, necessitating dialysis or kidney transplants².

“As a collective of patient advocates striving for health systems that uplift the needs of CKD patients, the Alliance urges governments to act decisively to protect at-risk patients by investing in proven policy solutions that can substantially slow disease progression and prevent severe complications and death from chronic kidney disease,” says Marisol Robles, a steering committee member of the Alliance and president of the Mario Robles Ossio Foundation in Mexico.

The global prevalence of CKD shows no sign of slowing. It is projected to become the 5th leading cause of death by 2040³. Yet policymakers are failing to give it the urgent attention it deserves. Only 47% of 160 countries have a strategy for CKD care, and where national strategies exist, they are focused on dialysis and transplantation, not early intervention⁴.

Addressing CKD requires a system-wide approach that prioritizes early disease identification and management, to achieve meaningful impact in reducing morbidity and mortality rates. This approach should include policy solutions focused on improving access to risk-based screening, eliminating health care system inefficiencies and prioritizing education and training of health care professionals, according to a report published by Global Alliance for Patient Access⁵.

The cost of chronic kidney disease on people, governments and the environment is high.

The negative impact of CKD reaches far beyond patient health. Treatment for patients with kidney failure places huge costs on health care systems and harms the environment immensely. Many countries spend 2-3% of their annual health care budget⁶ and use about 265 billion litres of water⁷ to provide dialysis therapy to patients with kidney failure annually. There is evidence of these profound challenges in countries like Australia.

“Kidneys are crucial to our survival. When these organs stop working, it wreaks havoc, compromising the well-being of patients and their families. People with kidney failure also struggle with financial hardship and other devastating socio-economic challenges. For instance, chronic kidney disease is costing the Australian economy \$9.9 billion per year in productivity-related losses and health care expenditure to provide dialysis and kidney transplants⁸,” elaborates Chris Forbes, a steering committee member of the Alliance and CEO of Kidney Health Australia.

Individual level approaches to CKD fall short.

While lifestyle modifications and medications can slow progression of chronic kidney disease, without a transformation of health care systems to prioritize screening and early treatment, many more people will be affected.

This is particularly true for Ms. Robles' home country of Mexico where patients have significant challenges accessing treatment to slow disease progression. Mexico has the sixth highest premature death rate in the world from chronic kidney disease¹⁰.

"It's important to educate at-risk people about how to keep their kidneys healthy but in countries like mine where health care systems are collapsing, governments have an obligation to implement policies that reflect international best-practice," concludes Ms Robles.

Ends

About the Global Patient Alliance for Kidney Health

The Global Patient Alliance for Kidney Health envisions health care systems that treat chronic kidney disease as a public health priority by ensuring at-risk patients can access comprehensive screening and early treatment, thereby slowing disease progression and preventing mortality. The Global Patient Alliance for Kidney Health brings together patient advocacy organizations from across the globe to raise awareness and improve access to early screening and treatment. The Alliance consists of organizations from the US, UK, China, Spain, Norway, France, Portugal, Australia, Mexico, Canada, Israel, Taiwan, Singapore, Brazil and Argentina. The non-profit Global Alliance for Patient Access serves as secretariat for the Alliance. Visit globalkidneyalliance.org for more information.

Global Patient Alliance for Kidney Health Steering Committee Members

Federación Nacional de Asociaciones – Spain

The Kidney Foundation of Canada

Kidney Health Australia

American Kidney Fund

National Kidney Foundation – US

Kidney Care UK

NEF Project – Mexico

Kidney Tec – China

Sponsorship Support

AstraZeneca has provided a financial sponsorship to the Global Alliance for Patient Access as the secretariat of the Global Patient Alliance for Kidney Health.

References

1. Jager KJ, Kovesdy C, Langham R, Rosenberg M, Jha V, Zoccali C. A single number for advocacy and communication-worldwide more than 850 million individuals have kidney diseases. *Nephrol Dial Transplant*. Nov 01 2019;34(11):1803-1805. doi:10.1093/ndt/gfz174
2. Tuot DS, Plantinga LC, Hsu CY, et al. Chronic kidney disease awareness among individuals with clinical markers of kidney dysfunction. *Clin J Am Soc Nephrol*. Aug 2011;6(8):1838-44. doi:10.2215/CJN.00730111
3. Foreman KJ, Marquez N, Dolgert A, et al. Forecasting life expectancy, years of life lost, and all-cause and cause-specific mortality for 250 causes of death: reference and alternative scenarios for 2016-40 for 195 countries and territories. *Lancet*. Nov 10 2018;392(10159):2052-2090. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(18)31694-5
4. Neuen BL, Bello AK, Levin A, et al. National health policies and strategies for addressing chronic kidney disease: Data from the International Society of Nephrology Global Kidney Health Atlas. *PLOS Glob Public Health*. 2023;3(2):e0001467. doi:10.1371/journal.pgph.0001467
5. Global Alliance for Patient Access. *Chronic Kidney Disease: How Early Diagnosis Can Drive Better Outcomes. Summary of Global Perspectives*, May 2023. <https://shorturl.at/tDQ27>

6. Forum WE. Early detection of chronic kidney disease can save lives and cut costs. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/03/early-detection-chronic-kidney-disease-save-lives-cut-costs/>
7. Hmida, MB, Mechichi, T, Piccoli, GB, Ksibi, M. Water implications in dialysis therapy, threats and opportunities to reduce water consumption: a call for the planet. *Kidney International*. Jul 2023; 104(1): 46-52. doi.org/10.1016/j.kint.2023.04.008
8. Deloitte Access Economics, Changing the chronic kidney disease landscape: The economic benefits of early detection and treatment (report commissioned by Kidney Health Australia. Feb 2023. <https://kidney.org.au/get-involved/advocacy/deloittereport>
9. Agudelo-Botero M, Valdez-Ortiz R, Giraldo-Rodríguez L, et al. Overview of the burden of chronic kidney disease in Mexico: secondary data analysis based on the Global Burden of Disease Study 2017. *BMJ Open*. 2020 Mar 25;10(3):e035285. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2019-035285.