



**BC Renal Agency**  
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority



## **NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

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### **New Independent Dialysis Program Improves Lives, Saves Healthcare Dollars**

More people with end-stage kidney disease now have the option to move to independent dialysis, including home-based alternatives and self care within a dialysis unit, leading to an improved quality of life and savings for the health system. This innovative new program, developed by the BC Provincial Renal Agency and renal care providers across the province, is a first in North America in terms of its scope.

Independent dialysis options are not only more convenient for patients, they also produce better medical outcomes. "Because patients can cleanse their blood more often or for longer periods of time, they reduce the negative effects of toxicity in the blood stream," says Dr. Adeera Levin, Executive Director of the BC Provincial Renal Agency, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority. "Essentially, the dialysis treatment is more like the function of healthy kidneys."

Patients experience a range of benefits, including improved energy levels, a reduced need for medications, few if any dietary restrictions, fewer side effects such as cramping and nausea that are often associated with traditional hemodialysis, as well as fewer ER visits and hospital stays.

"It can transform the lives of patients, many of whom for the first time in years feel well enough to resume working, are able to eat and drink what they want, and can have full, active schedules," says Ron Walker, President, Kidney Foundation of Canada, BC Branch.

"Patients who use independent dialysis are able to enhance their quality of life by managing their disease while remaining close to family and community," said Colin Hansen, Minister of Health Services. "In addition, the program provides significant costs savings which will enable us to reinvest to meet the needs of a patient population that is growing 8-10 percent per year."

The BCPRA anticipates the program will save over \$1 million this fiscal year alone. The cost for a patient on independent dialysis ranges from \$35,000 - \$50,000 per year,

depending on the modality (i.e. peritoneal dialysis vs. hemodialysis). The cost for a patient who receives care in a hospital dialysis unit can be as high as \$72,000. These figures don't include additional savings the program will generate due to fewer patient visits to emergency departments, fewer hospitalizations and less need for costly dialysis unit expansions in the future to accommodate the increasing numbers of patients who have kidney failure.

Sixty patients are expected to transition to independent dialysis options by spring 2005, with the numbers projected to increase as the program grows. Approximately 1,600 patients in BC currently receive hemodialysis treatments, while 550 are on peritoneal dialysis.

*The BC Provincial Renal Agency (BCPRA), an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, plans and coordinates the care of people with kidney disease throughout the province to ensure equitable access to high quality care.*

*The Kidney Foundation of Canada is a national volunteer organization committed to reducing the burden of kidney disease through funding and stimulating innovative research, providing education and support, promoting access to high quality healthcare and increasing public awareness and commitment to advancing kidney health and organ donation.*

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