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MEDIA RELEASE

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BC Renal Agency Celebrates 10 Years of Success

Better early-stage detection and more dialysis options

Vancouver, BC – Patients with kidney disease in BC have better health outcomes than patients with the same disease elsewhere in Canada, according to BC Provincial Renal Agency (BCPRA) executive director, Dr. Adeera Levin.

At least part of the reason for that is the existence of a provincially coordinated network – led by BCPRA, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority – that provides care for kidney patients across the province.

“I would like to congratulate the BC Renal Agency on reaching this significant milestone,” says Health Minister George Abbott. “The calibre of the work the agency does in early identification, education and treatment for British Columbians with kidney disease is unparalleled across the country.”

“BC is the only place in North America that offers a fully coordinated system of renal care for kidney patients,” says Dr. Levin. “As a result, wherever patients live in the province they have access to the same level of care and a variety of treatment options.”

The BCPRA celebrated its tenth anniversary and a decade of ongoing success in improving outcomes for patients with kidney disease at its annual BC Nephrology Days event, held last week in Vancouver. The event attracted more than 450 kidney disease experts and health care practitioners from across the province and the country.

Among the successes announced by BCPRA at its BC Nephrology Days event was the agency’s strategy for early identification of people with chronic kidney disease. Since 2002 the number of people in BC identified with early-stage kidney disease has increased from 2,356 to 8,106.

“The importance of identifying the disease in its early stages is that we can help these patients avoid the need for dialysis by teaching them to manage their condition through diet and other lifestyle changes,” says Dr. Levin.

Since 2002 the agency has also expanded the province’s capacity for providing dialysis by 25 per cent, and through its independent dialysis program has achieved a 69 percent increase per year in the number of patients on home dialysis. With home dialysis patients manage the process on their own, often choosing to dialyze at night while they sleep. As a result, they benefit from more hours of dialysis than patients who must visit a community clinic or a hospital for dialysis.

An estimated 145,000 British Columbians live with some form of kidney disease, including over 2,500 who must receive regular dialysis to stay alive. Kidney disease is also strongly associated with other chronic health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease.

For more information about the BC Provincial Renal Agency visit www.bcrenalagency.ca or contact Bev Holmes at 604 873 1353.