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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **KIDNEY PATIENTS BENEFIT FROM NOCTURNAL DIALYSIS PROGRAM**

VANCOUVER – Kidney disease patients who cannot dialyze at home can now do so overnight at Vancouver General Hospital thanks to a new and innovative nocturnal dialysis pilot project, which is Canada’s first independent in-centre nocturnal dialysis program.

The nocturnal dialysis pilot project allows patients to independently manage their own dialysis runs three times per week, from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., while they sleep at the hospital. Participants in the pilot manage every aspect of their dialysis treatment, from ordering their supplies and setting up the machine to inserting needles and drawing their own bloodwork.

“Not only is the new nocturnal dialysis more convenient for patients but it utilizes resources to provide them with the most advanced renal care available,” said Health Services Minister George Abbott. “Through innovative approaches to delivering health care such as the nocturnal dialysis program, we are delivering better health outcomes for British Columbians.”

Nocturnal dialysis has proven health and lifestyle benefits in comparison to conventional hemodialysis. Overnight dialysis will enable patients with end-stage kidney disease to reclaim parts of their former lives, including the ability to work during the day.

Although similar hospital-based programs exist in Toronto and Edmonton, patients in these programs have their dialysis administered by staff. In the VGH pilot project, however, each patient has gone through an intensive six weeks of training so they can safely administer their own treatments, as do the 145 home hemodialysis patients spread across B.C. and the Yukon.

For patients like Jared Provost, the new program could not have come at a better time. Provost had been dialyzing at home, but was considering a return to daytime dialysis. For Provost, the new in-hospital program will allow him to build his confidence at managing his own dialysis.

“I was considering a return to daytime dialysis, when this new pilot project was suggested as an option,” said Provost. “I now have the best of both worlds – dialyzing at night doesn’t affect my ability to work and I can do my own independent dialysis in a place where there’s medical support if I need it.”

The nocturnal dialysis pilot project began Jan. 5 and ends March 31. Funding for the pilot project, \$46,000, was provided by the BC Renal Agency, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority. If deemed successful, the facility-based nocturnal dialysis program will be expanded to allow more patient participation, both at the VGH location and provincially.

“There is clear evidence that increased patient self care and longer dialysis runs improve outcomes, which is why the BC Renal Agency and renal programs across the province have placed such an emphasis on helping patients to be independent,” said Dr. Adeera Levin, executive director of the BC Provincial Renal Agency. “Approximately 145 patients manage their hemodialysis at home, and we are expanding options for those who want to maintain their independence, but can’t dialyze at home.”

Although overnight home dialysis is available, not all patients are suitable candidates. Some patients can’t dialyze at home due to the home renovations required to accommodate the specialized equipment, or their living situations prevent it. For patients who need to build confidence in managing their own dialysis, the nocturnal outpatient program is an excellent option to advance their independence.

“Giving patients overnight access to in-hospital hemodialysis opens the self-dialysis program to a patient population that couldn’t before access it,” said Dr. Michael Copland, provincial medical director, independent hemodialysis program, BC Renal Agency and medical lead independent hemodialysis at Vancouver Coastal Health. “By allowing these patients to dialyze overnight in the hospital, we’re giving them back their lives that were taken away by their failing kidneys.”

Hemodialysis patients typically undergo hospital or clinic-based dialysis, three times per week, four hours per visit. Overnight dialysis takes as long as eight hours. This longer process removes more impurities from the patient’s blood, resulting in patients with higher energy levels who require fewer medications to keep their disease in check.

The BC Renal Agency has improved early diagnosis and intervention, providing improved treatment options, and ensuring that the system of provincial renal care is financially sustainable, so that patients have access to the care they need, when and where they need it. Since 2001, British Columbia has expanded kidney care services to meet the needs of 42 per cent more dialysis patients and 444 per cent more patients in the early stages of kidney disease.

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