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MEDIA RELEASE

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Vancouver Coastal Health / Providence Health Care Kidney Community Celebrates World Kidney Day, March 12, 2009

Vancouver, BC – March 12, 2009 is a day of international celebration and education, with renal communities worldwide raising awareness of the kidneys' vital role in the maintenance of good health.

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is one of the fastest growing epidemics in the western world.

“In British Columbia up to one in 30 people have this potentially life-threatening condition and most of them don't even know it,” says BC Minister of Health Services George Abbott. “World Kidney Day helps remind all British Columbians that early detection of CKD helps prevent or delay serious health measures up to and including life-saving dialysis and kidney transplants.”

Known as the body's master chemist, the kidneys remove wastes from the body (by filtering over 200 litres of blood a day), regulate the levels of water and minerals in the body and produce hormones that control important body functions. If the kidneys stop functioning, the body can't survive, and dialysis or a transplant is required.

In addition to World Kidney Day on March 12, the month of March is National Kidney Month. The Kidney Foundation of Canada, BC Branch, is partnering with the BC Renal Agency, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, on a range of public awareness activities throughout the month - from an online kidney quiz to informational articles in partner newsletters. The partners are also challenging renal programs to celebrate World Kidney Day and raise awareness through such events as a morning or lunchtime "walk around the hospital/community dialysis unit" with as many staff/patients/volunteers as possible.

Some of the activities taking place in Vancouver on March 12th include:

Vancouver

- 1) Vancouver City Hall Rotunda (10am - 3pm) blood pressure screening
- 2) Painting event with renal clinic staff at St. Paul's Hospital creating kidney-themed art
- 3) Kidney bean guessing contest
- 4) False Creek Racing Canoe Club - O2P Dragon Boat Team, special race (9am, Saturday, March 14th at Granville Island)

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Backgrounder

Are Your Kidneys OK?

Test your knowledge of kidney disease by filling out the quiz posted throughout Kidney Month at www.bcrenalagency.ca. At the end of March, random draws will be made and prizes awarded.

What are some of the symptoms to look for?

In the early stages of kidney disease, many individuals experience no symptoms. However, common early symptoms of kidney disease include: foamy or bloody urine; a frequent need to urinate at night; headaches; and puffy eyes or ankles.

Why is there a Kidney Month?

While patients with kidney disease in British Columbia have some of the best outcomes in the country and a broad range of care options, early diagnosis and treatment are essential to achieve the best patient outcomes, as changes to diet or medication can slow or even stop the progress of kidney disease.

During the March Drive...

More than 8,000 Kidney Foundation volunteers will canvass homes across BC to raise awareness and funds for research and patient programs.

Where can I find out more about World Kidney Day?

www.worldkidneyday.org

Where can I learn more about kidney disease?

www.bcrenalagency.ca

www.kidney.bc.ca

The BC Renal Agency (www.bcrenalagency.ca) and the Kidney Foundation of Canada, BC Branch (www.kidney.bc.ca) are good sources of information for patients and their families. The BC Renal Agency, [an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority](#), has an informative DVD (English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi and Tagalog versions) featuring patients who tell their stories about living and dealing positively with kidney disease. The DVD can be ordered through the agency's online order form. It can also be viewed online (English only).

