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MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

British Columbia Kidney Communities Celebrate 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 around the province on March 12th include:

Abbotsford

- 1) Abbotsford Kidney Care Clinic - poster board displays and chronic kidney disease quiz with a draw for prizes
- 2) Mill Lake walk and refreshments, 1pm

Cowichan

Cowichan District Hospital (10am - 3pm) information booth

Coquitlam

- 1) Tri-Cities Dialysis Unit - World Kidney Day themed word search puzzle for patients and a poster display in the patient lounge

Kelowna

- 1) Walk for Kidney Health over the William R. Bennett Bridge
- 2) Orchard Park Mall (10am - 9pm) information booth and blood pressure clinic

Kamloops

Sahali Centre Mall (11am - 4pm)

- 1) Opening ceremonies and ribbon cutting by Mayor Peter Milobar (11am)
- 2) Blood pressure clinic with student nurses and RN teacher from Thompson Rivers University
- 3) Information booth and in-mall walk

Nanaimo

Nanaimo General Hospital - in-hospital walk for kidney health (leaves dialysis unit at 5:30pm)

Penticton

Cherry Lane Mall (10am - 8pm) information booth and blood pressure clinic

Prince George

- 1) Pine Centre Mall (1pm) information booth and in-mall walk
- 2) Walk for Kidney Health up University Hill (4pm - 5pm)

Quesnel

West Park Mall (1pm - 3pm) information booth and blood pressure clinic

Sparwood

Greenwood Shopping Centre Mall (10am - 5pm) information booth and blood pressure clinic

Trail

Waneta Plaza Mall (3pm - 6pm) information booth and drop in walk around the mall

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)

Vernon

Display in Superstore

Victoria

- 1) Parliament Buildings (10am - 3pm, Wednesday, March 11th) information booth and blood pressure clinic
- 2) Royal Jubilee Hospital walk - participants meet in Cafeteria B room at 10:30am.
- 3) Display in Royal Jubilee cafeteria

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MORE

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).