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MEDIA RELEASE

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Kidney conference tackles issues of widespread concern: Transplant tourism, link between phosphorous and heart health, and medication safety

Vancouver, BC – Every year, about 66,000 people around the world receive a kidney transplant. And because the supply of kidneys for donation is much lower than the demand from people with end-stage kidney disease, up to ten percent of those organ recipients will have travelled to a Third World country to acquire their new kidney, typically from an impoverished local donor.

Transplant tourism is a controversial and growing practice. It is also the subject of one of many presentations at BC Nephrology Days, October 2 and 3 at the convention facilities of the Renaissance Hotel in Vancouver.

Sponsored by the BC Provincial Renal Agency (BCPRA), the annual BC Nephrology Days conference brings together experts and health care practitioners from across the province and the country to discuss issues and the latest developments related to kidney disease.

This year's event also includes a presentation about the **negative health effects of phosphorous in our daily diet**. Phosphorous levels are a serious concern for people with kidney disease. But new research finds that the increasing use of phosphates in food products is now also associated with a higher risk of heart disease across the general population.

Another presentation is about **a solution to a serious risk for all patients in the health care system**. Medication errors are the second leading cause of unintentional adverse events for patients in Canadian hospitals. They are also a special concern for patients with kidney disease, which generally requires more drugs for treatment than any other chronic condition. Efforts by the BCPRA to improve drug safety for renal patients at all points of care across the province are putting BC at the forefront of the growing medication reconciliation movement in Canada.

In British Columbia, an estimated 145,000 people live with some form of kidney disease. The disease is also strongly associated with such other chronic health conditions as diabetes and heart disease.

For more information about BC Nephrology Days 2008, visit www.bcrenalagency.ca.

To arrange an interview with one of the presenters or other health experts attending this event, contact Kevin Noel at 604-873-1353 or 604-908-0810 (cell).