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MEDIA RELEASE

March 10, 2010

For Immediate Release

B.C. Communities Celebrate World Kidney Day on March 11

Vancouver, BC – World Kidney Day, March 11, is an internationally recognized day dedicated to raising awareness of kidney disease and the vital role that kidneys play in keeping us healthy.

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is one of the fastest growing health issues in the western world. In British Columbia, approximately one in 30 people live with CKD, and because there are no early symptoms, most are unaware they have this potentially life-threatening disease.

“World Kidney Day provides an important awareness reminder for all of us to take action to protect our health, especially the health of our kidneys,” said Health Services Minister Kevin Falcon. “Like so many other chronic diseases, healthy lifestyle choices play a crucial role in preventing and managing kidney disease.”

The purpose of kidneys is to filter blood to remove wastes from the body. They also regulate water and mineral levels and produce hormones controlling vital body functions. If a person’s kidneys stop functioning, they need ongoing dialysis or a kidney transplant to survive.

In addition to World Kidney Day on March 11, 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 March.

Some of the activities taking place in B.C. communities on March 11 include:

Abbotsford

- Kidney health information table at Seven Oaks Mall and at the Sikh Temple
- In the lobby of Abbotsford Regional Hospital on March 11 and 12 there will be a kidney health educational booth and a blood pressure clinic for members of the public.

Duncan

- Kidney health information display at Cowichan District Hospital from 10a.m. to 2 p.m.

Kamloops

- Mayor Peter Milobar will preside over the official opening of the World Kidney Day event at the Sahali Mall. A kidney health information table with a kidney dialysis night cyclor machine will be on display in the mall.

Nanaimo

- Walk for kidney health around Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, from the Community Dialysis Unit on Estevan Road to Nanaimo Regional General Hospital and return.

New Westminster

- Kidney health information booth at Royal Columbian Hospital on March 12.

For hospital staff and visitors there will be interactive displays, a blood pressure clinic and body mass index (BMI) screening. There will also be draws for gift baskets, and nurses, dietitians and social workers will be on hand to answer questions about kidney disease and maintaining kidney health.

Prince George

- People with kidney disease and their caregivers will walk through Pine Centre Mall, where there will be a kidney health information booth and blood pressure clinic.
- Kidney health information table at Prince George Regional Hospital.

Surrey

- Kidney health information booth at Surrey Memorial Hospital cafeteria, March 11 and 12. There will be interactive displays, a blood pressure clinic and body mass index (BMI) screening. There will also be draws for gift baskets, and nurses, dietitians and social workers will be on hand to answer questions about kidney disease and maintaining kidney health.

Terrace

- There will be a kidney disease awareness walk along a town trail at 4 p.m. After the walk, the Northwest Community Hemodialysis Unit will be open to the public for refreshments. There will also be a free blood pressure clinic along with information about maintaining kidney health.

Trail

- There will be a kidney health awareness information booth at Waneta Mall on March 13.

Vancouver

- In the Kidney Care Clinic at Vancouver General Hospital, there will be a nurse-run blood pressure clinic open to the public, an apple eating contest, and a kidney bean guessing contest.
- At BC Children's Hospital there will be an information table and a blood pressure clinic for the public. A kidney health awareness walk will be done around the hospital grounds.

Victoria

- Kidney disease patients and caregivers will participate in an organized walk around Royal Jubilee Hospital. The walk will begin at the Memorial Pavilion at 11 a.m. The hospital's renal program mascot, *Sidney the Kidney*, will lead the walk.

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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).