



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**GRANT CYCLE OPEN FOR INNOVATIONS IN KIDNEY PATIENT SAFETY
AAKP CONTINUES NATIONAL EFFORTS IN PATIENT SAFETY**

TAMPA, FL – The American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP), the largest and oldest fully independent kidney patient organization in America, announced the opening of the 2020 grant cycle for the Jenny Kitsen Patient Safety Award. To apply for the award online, visit <https://aakp.org/programs-and-events/jenny-kitsen-patient-safety-grant/> or for more information contact Erin Kahle, Director of Stakeholder Operations, AAKP Center for Patient Engagement & Advocacy, ekahle@aakp.org. **Applications are due November 29, 2019.**

The Jenny Kitsen Patient Safety Award funds an annual lecture, activity or program that will advance kidney patient safety by exploring innovation in health systems management. The U.S. General Accountability Office (GAO) reports that 40 million Americans suffer from kidney disease. Kidney care costs the American taxpayer over \$99 billion per year, including \$68 billion for chronic kidney disease care, and \$31 billion for the more than 700,000 individuals who suffer from complete renal failure which includes those on dialysis or have a functioning kidney transplant. Patients who undergo dialysis treatment have an increased risk for getting a health care-associated infection (HAI) These patients are medically vulnerable, have weakened immune systems, are at an increased risk of infection and sometimes require frequent hospitalizations and surgery as a result of an infection.

Richard Knight, President of AAKP and a former dialysis patient, current kidney transplant recipient stated, "For Americans who are receiving life-saving dialysis care, their health outcomes and lives depend upon the infection control efforts among the healthcare professionals who directly serve them as well as those who manage the health systems that deliver their care. The Jenny Kitsen Patient Safety Award is designed to foster a conversation in patient care and to further reduce the instances of preventable infections, an honorable goal that benefits patients, their families and taxpayers."

The award was created in 2014 by the former Network of New England whose Board of Directors established an endowment to continue the patient safety work of the non-profit organization led by former Executive Director Jenny Kitsen. Among the organizations eligible to apply for the Jenny Kitsen

Patient Safety Award are 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(6) organizations, public and government agencies, and many other organizations and institutions as outlined on the grant application.

AAKP has a long history of promoting patient safety and infection control efforts through the Jenny Kitsen Patient Safety Award and close collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. AAKP was an founding partner of the CDC Making Dialysis Safer Coalition, launched in Sept. 2016, and later released the CDC and AAKP co-branded [Conversation Starter to Prevent Infections in Dialysis Patients](#). The *Conversation Starter* is a way for patients and family members to initiate a discussion with dialysis facility staff about steps the facility takes to prevent infections. AAKP also produced the [2017 HealthLine webinar Making Dialysis Safer for Patients](#). In recognition of her efforts to combat infection risks among kidney patients, AAKP awarded the AAKP National Public Service Award to Dr. Priti Patel, the Dialysis Activity Leader within the Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion of the CDC ([January 2017 aakpRENALIFE article feature – Dr. Priti Patel](#)).

AAKP is also engaged with the [Federal Health Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee, \(HICPAC\)](#), a Federal Advisory Committee appointed to provide advice and guidance to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and CDC regarding the practice of infection control and strategies for surveillance, prevention, and control of healthcare-associated infections, antimicrobial resistance, and related events in healthcare settings. AAKP Chair of Policy and Global Affairs, Paul T. Conway, serves as AAKP liaison to HICPAC.

Past Patient Safety Award recipients have included: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019); National Kidney Foundation (2018); National Renal Administrators Association (2018); A.T. Still University of Oral Health (2017); All Kidney Patients Support Group (2017); National Renal Administrators Association (2016); Renal Physicians Association (2016); American Nephrology Nurses Association (2015); Forum of ESRD Networks (2015)

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Founded in 1969, AAKP is governed by a patient-majority Board of Directors and conducts national education programs designed to better inform kidney patients, care partners and policy-makers about the true impacts of kidney disease, prevention efforts and treatment methods. For more information visit www.aakp.org or follow us on social media ([Facebook @kidneypatient](#) and [Twitter @kidneypatients](#))