



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Jennifer Duplessie
Marketing and Communications Manager
(813) 400-2394
jduplessie@aakp.org

LARGEST AMERICAN KIDNEY PATIENT GROUP MARKS JUNETEENTH WITH CALL FOR DIVERSITY IN CLINICAL TRIALS AND END TO CARE DISPARITY

Washington, D.C.: The American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP), the largest kidney patient organization in America, and the independent voice for kidney patients, issued a Juneteenth statement from AAKP President Richard Knight. Mr. Knight has battled kidney disease for 23 years, including 3 years on hemodialysis and, for the last 14 years, as a kidney transplant recipient. Mr. Knight serves on the Board of Advisors for the College of Business at Bowie State University, a historically black college (HBCU), and is also an Adjunct Instructor for business strategy. Mr. Knight is a graduate of Hampton University and received his Masters of Business Administration from the Darden School of Business at the University of Virginia. AAKP has a proud 50-year history of collaborating with private sector companies on clinical trials related to innovations in therapeutics, devices and diagnostics.

To All Friends, Caregivers and Allies of American Kidney Patients:

Over the past few weeks, I hope each of us has stopped to reflect on who we are and what we stand for - our common humanity, the ideals we strive for, both on our own and as a nation.

We, at AAKP, recognize the disproportionate impact kidney disease has on individuals in the black and brown communities across this country. Our fundamental purpose for advocating on behalf of and representing the interests of kidney patients has improved treatments for those who suffer - but tremendous work remains to be done.

In recent months, millions of dollars have been invested in COVID-19 research by the Federal government as well as the private sector. As I look at the impact of healthcare disparities in black and brown communities, which has been worsened by the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on these same communities, I am disturbed. I am disturbed because of the lost opportunities - because much of the research and many of the clinical trials have not included kidney patients, despite the strong Federal agency encouragement to do so. We know that the proactive inclusion of kidney patients in COVID-19 research would include a significant percentage of patients from black and brown communities. At 13% of the population, African-Americans represent 32% of patients receiving dialysis treatment.

As a kidney community, we should take heart knowing that, united together in purpose, we have the shared intelligence and capacities to drive many more innovations and save many more lives. To do this, we need more thoughtful patient engagement - which means the inclusion of even more minorities in research, clinical trials, and disease prevention and treatment education. Most importantly, we must be united in our resolve to

end disparate care and to expand care choices for all kidney patients because every kidney patient has the right to pursue their dreams and aspirations.

Today, Friday, June 19th, marks the celebration of Juneteenth, or Freedom Day, which commemorates the emancipation of the last remaining enslaved African Americans in the Confederacy—more than two years after Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation.

As Americans, Juneteenth gives each of us an annual opportunity to celebrate African-American freedom, promote African-American history, and foster continued African-American achievement.

As AAKP joins our members in celebration, we thank you for the empathy and care you have for all patients and ask that you keep up the fight for those most disproportionately impacted by kidney disease. Please consider AAKP as a reliable ally in this shared and noble cause.

On behalf of AAKP
RICHARD KNIGHT
President

American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP) is the oldest and largest fully independent kidney patient organization in the United States and the strongest advocates for kidney patient consumer care choice. From 1969-1973, AAKP patients led the effort in the U.S. Congress and with senior White House officials to establish the End Stage Renal Disease Program, which has saved over a million lives through modern dialysis coverage. AAKP announced the start of the Decade of the Kidney™ in June of 2019 and since 2018 has conducted the largest voter education and registration drive in history among kidney patients, caregivers and healthcare professionals aimed at increasing the kidney patient voice in policy decisions as Kidney Voters. AAKP fights for patient care choice, early detection; increased kidney transplantation and pre-emptive transplantation; protection of the patient/physician relationship; promotion of research and innovation; and the elimination of barriers for patient access to available treatment options.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Diana Clynes Executive Director

813-400-2391

dclynes@aakp.org