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**TOP U.S. KIDNEY PATIENT GROUP UNVEILS NEW BOARD OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS
VETERAN VOICES REPRESENTED BY U.S. MARINES AND U.S. ARMY**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP) announced results of their recent 2020-2021 Board Officers and Directors elections. Founded in 1969, AAKP is the oldest and largest fully independent kidney organization in the United States, with a majority patient-lead Board. The elections reflect AAKP’s commitment to their leadership succession plan and an expansion of capacities to execute their national strategy to increase patient consumer care choice, expand investments in kidney research and innovation, and to put an end to status quo kidney care through wider patient access to home dialysis therapies, pre-emptive transplants, and artificial wearable and implantable kidneys.

The announcement comes on the eve of the AAKP Annual National Patient Meeting, the largest kidney patient meeting in America, to be held September 11-12. This year’s Patient Meeting is virtual and completely open access for all interested in the latest information on kidney disease treatment and innovation. Registration is required—[click here](#) to register for the event. The Association is proud to announce the following Officers and Directors of its National Board for 2020-2021:

Executive Leadership

- Richard Knight, President; former dialysis patient; current transplant recipient ([Read bio](#))
- Edward V. Hickey, III, USMC veteran, Vice President; Chair, AAKP Veterans Health Initiative (VHI); former AAKP Secretary; kidney patient ([Read bio](#))
- Daniel Abel, Secretary; former Vice President; former dialysis patient; current transplant recipient ([Read bio](#))
- Paul T. Conway, Chair of Public Policy and Global Affairs; Immediate Past President; former dialysis patient; current transplant recipient ([Read bio](#))

Directors At-Large (biographical information - <https://aakp.org/about/board-of-directors/>)

- Kent Bressler, MA, RN, U. S. Army veteran; pre-emptive transplant recipient
- Lisa Garner, former dialysis patient; current transplant recipient
- Patrick O. Gee, Sr., PhD, JLC, former dialysis patient; current transplant recipient
- Brian Hess, former transplant recipient; current home hemodialysis patient
- Doug Johnson, MD, Vice Chairman, Dialysis Clinic, Inc.
- Jennifer Jones, USMC veteran; former dialysis patient; current transplant recipient
- Janice Lea, MD, MSc, FASN, Professor of Medicine, Emory University; Clinical Director of Nephrology and Chief Medical Director of Emory Dialysis
- James W. Myers, III, former dialysis patient; current transplant recipient; recipient of inaugural AAKP National Social Media Education & Advocacy Award
- David Rodriguez, former dialysis patient; current transplant recipient
- Dale Rogers, former dialysis patient; current transplant recipient
- Suzanne Ruff, living organ donor
- Sara Eve Schaffer, MBA, MA, RD, Executive Director, Health Services Advisory Group, Inc. (HSAG)
- Lana Schmidt, MBA, former home hemodialysis patient; current transplant recipient
- Barry Smith, MD, PhD, Director of the Dreyfus Health Policy and Research Center

Richard Knight, AAKP President, stated, "I am honored to be re-elected to a second term as President of the largest kidney patient organization in America and pleased to have led AAKP through our 50th Anniversary. I welcome our new Board members Ms. Jennifer Jones, Ms. Sara Eve Schaffer, and Dr. Barry Smith. AAKP is fortunate to have such superb and knowledgeable new additions on our national leadership team. I also wish to thank my outgoing Board colleagues whose dutiful service to the organization over the past several years helped expand our standing and reach. AAKP continues to educate the kidney patient community on the dangers of COVID-19 as we encourage greater representation of kidney patients and underserved communities in vaccine clinical trials and other kidney-related research initiatives." Mr. Knight, a former Congressional staffer and liaison to the Congressional Black Caucus, is a small business consultant and Co-Chair of the Community Engagement Committee for the Kidney Precision Medicine Project (KPMP), an initiative of the National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIH/NIDDK).

Newly elected AAKP Vice President Edward V. Hickey, III, stated, "I sincerely appreciate and respect the AAKP Board of Directors' decision to nominate and elect me to serve as the Vice President of AAKP. My time on the Board has been challenging and fulfilling and I look forward to continuing to serve AAKP and the larger kidney community; and will dedicate myself to the continued expansion of our efforts nationally and globally in our drive for greater research, innovation, and patient care choice. While we've made progress over the past few years, patient experiences and insights deserve far greater weight in policy and payment decisions, and I am confident patients will play a determinative role in ending status quo kidney care throughout the [Decade of the Kidney™](#)." Hickey is an attorney and USMC veteran whose public service includes posts on Capitol Hill and two presidential administrations. He will continue to serve as the Chair of the [AAKP Veterans Health Initiative](#).

Diana Clynes, AAKP Executive Director, stated, “The AAKP Executive Leadership and National Board of Directors is comprised of a diverse group of individuals who lend their strengths, expertise, and personal networks to advance the mission of the organization and support the U.S. and global kidney patient population. Each individual on our Board has been impacted by kidney disease in some capacity—whether personally as a patient or as a family member or caregiver. Most notable, over the past six months, the kidney community here in the U.S. and across the world have managed the unprecedented health and economic crisis of COVID-19. From the start of the outbreak, AAKP committed ourselves to complete fulfillment and further expansion of our mission to meet the needs of the kidney community during this time. It is truly an honor to serve alongside the men and women that make up AAKP’s Executive Leadership and Board.”

Over the past six months, AAKP has produced three national and international virtual events covering issues related to COVID-19; research and clinical trials; efforts to correct disparities in clinical trials; as well as new innovations in kidney drugs, biologics, and devices. Viewing audiences have spanned more than 70 countries and, combined, involved over 75 global and national experts; 40 American and global patient experts; and over 100 current and emerging topics. AAKP also produced over 10 webinars within our [COVID-19 HealthLine series](#) on topics including [Return to School](#), [Mental Health Management](#), and [updates by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#). These webinars involved over 14 experts and 24 patient experts, and the total engagement of these events to date, excluding the Annual National Patient Meeting, exceeds over 50,000 people.

AAKP Board Members and patient members play key roles in top federal initiatives including: the Executive Order on *Advancing American Kidney Care*; the National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIH/NIDDK) Kidney Precision Medicine Project (KPMP); the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and ASN partnership, the Kidney Health Initiative (KHI); and the Kidney Innovation Accelerator, or KidneyX. To become a FREE member of AAKP, visit www.aakp.org/join and follow us on Facebook [@kidneypatient](#) and Twitter [@kidneypatients](#).

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About the American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP): AAKP is among the strongest advocates for kidney patient consumer care choice and treatment innovation. From 1969-1973, AAKP patients led the effort in the U.S. Congress, alongside senior White House officials, to establish the End Stage Renal Disease Program, which has saved over a million lives through modern dialysis coverage. For more information, visit www.aakp.org. Follow AAKP on social media: [@kidneypatient on Facebook](#), and [@kidneypatients on Twitter](#).