



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **GRANT CYCLE OPENS FOR KIDNEY PATIENT SAFETY INNOVATIONS**

**TAMPA, FL** – The American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP), the oldest and largest fully independent kidney patient organization in America, announced the opening of the 2021 grant cycle for its AAKP Jenny Kitsen Patient Safety Award. The organization works closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to make certain infection control standards remain a priority in all performance metrics and reimbursement decisions.

Among organizations eligible to apply for the Award are 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(6) organizations, public and government agencies, and other organizations as outlined on the application. To apply online, visit <https://aakp.org/programs-and-events/jenny-kitsen-patient-safety-grant/> or for information contact Erin Kahle, Director of Stakeholder Operations, AAKP Center for Patient Engagement & Advocacy, [ekahle@aakp.org](mailto:ekahle@aakp.org). **Applications are due October 16, 2020.**

The Award funds a lecture, activity, or program that will advance innovative kidney patient safety knowledge and/or disseminates research results throughout the kidney community. 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, a former dialysis patient, and 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 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. During this unprecedented time of COVID-19 and its impact throughout the kidney community—with kidney patients noted by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) list of people at risk for severe COVID-19 illness, we expect to receive a high volume of grant submissions."

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, AAKP has conducted two major international and national virtual meetings and over ten targeted safety HealthLine webinars to educate medical professionals, patients, and families on the danger of COVID-19. These programs have reached audiences in over 70 countries with a combined audience of over 50,000 viewers. The HealthLine webinars were conducted with strategic partners including the CDC; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and AAKP's Veterans Health Initiative; American Society of Transplantation; and the American Society of Transplant Surgeons. The sessions bring factual information to kidney patients on a variety of important topics across the disease spectrum including vascular access care, return to school issues, mental health, telehealth, strategies to avoid/lessen the risk of COVID-19 exposure, and more. [Click here](#) to watch OnDemand all AAKP Coronavirus webinars and for COVID-19 patient information.

AAKP maintains a close collaborative partnership with both CDC and CMS to further patient safety. AAKP is part of 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. For CMS, AAKP's Richard Knight and Paul Conway have served on numerous Technical Evaluation Panels that have crafted patient-centered quality measures over the past five years.

AAKP was a founding partner of the CDC Making Dialysis Safer Coalition, launched in September 2016, and released the CDC and AAKP co-branded [Conversation Starter to Prevent Infections in Dialysis Patients](#). The *Conversation Starter* is a tool for patients and family members to initiate a discussion with dialysis facility staff about infection prevention. AAKP also produced the [2017 HealthLine webinar Making Dialysis Safer for Patients](#). AAKP awarded their National Public Service Award to Dr. Priti Patel, former Dialysis Activity Leader, Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion of the CDC, now part of the Division of Viral Hepatitis.

The Patient Safety 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. Past recipients include: Satellite Healthcare (2020); Alabama A&M University (2020); 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); and Forum of ESRD Networks (2015).

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Founded in 1969, AAKP is led by a patient-majority Board of Directors and is a global leader for kidney patient consumer care choice. From 1969-1973, AAKP patients led efforts in the U.S. Congress, alongside White House officials, to establish the End Stage Renal Disease Program. In 2019, AAKP began the [Decade of the Kidney™](#) upon the signing of the White House *Executive Order on Advancing American Kidney Health Initiative* and, since 2018, has conducted the largest virtual kidney voter

registration drive in America, the "*I am a Kidney Voter*" campaign. Visit [www.aakp.org](http://www.aakp.org) and follow AAKP on social media at [@kidneypatient](https://www.facebook.com/kidneypatient) on Facebook and [@kidneypatients](https://twitter.com/kidneypatients) on Twitter.