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**AAKP UNVEILS 2021 NATIONAL KIDNEY PATIENT SAFETY AWARD WINNER**

***Patients Honor Kidneys Quest Foundation For Diabetic Kidney Disease Effort***

**TAMPA, FL** – The American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP), the oldest and largest fully independent kidney patient organization in the nation, announced [Kidneys Quest Foundation](#) as the recipient of its 2021 [Jenny Kitsen Patient Safety Award](#). AAKP works in close collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on patient safety programs designed to protect the best interests of patient consumers and to improve medical staff and facility practices and care outcomes. As longtime advocates for patient care choice and health consumer rights, AAKP's Patient Safety Award targets funds to programs that, from a patient viewpoint, incorporate novel efforts to improve safety through innovations in health systems management and education.

Kidneys Quest Foundation will use the grant for their *2021 Kidney Disease Impact Healthcare Conference* focused on Diabetic Kidney Disease (DKD) during and after COVID-19. The conference is targeted toward kidney patients, families and caregivers, and healthcare professionals, and will provide information on clinical breakthroughs and healthcare issues from leading doctors, specialists, researchers, and professionals studying DKD. The virtual event takes place Tuesday, March 9, 2021, and registration information can be found at <https://kidneysquestfoundation.org/2021-kidney-disease-impact-conference/>.

"Kidneys Quest Foundation has a tremendous record of educating people about kidney diseases throughout Central and Southern California and well beyond. They were selected for this national AAKP award based on the unique merits of their upcoming virtual international healthcare event that features timely sessions on diabetic kidney disease amidst the Coronavirus pandemic. AAKP is steadfast in our support for inclusive virtual educational programs and it is an honor to recognize Kidneys Quest Foundation for their creative use of technology to empower patients and professionals on how to safely manage kidney treatments during this challenging period," stated Richard Knight, President of AAKP, former in-center hemodialysis patient, and current transplant recipient.

"I am honored to receive this AAKP award and so incredibly grateful of my entire team at Kidneys Quest Foundation," said President Carolyn Urquidez. "Our vision is being that resource-link in the heart of the renal community. We are in this together."

AAKP's Chair of Policy and Global Affairs Paul T. Conway stated, "Since 2019, AAKP has conducted the largest patient-led virtual global conferences on innovations in kidney treatment and the Kidneys Quest Foundation virtual international event exceeds our high standards for patient-centered kidney disease and

safety education. Diabetic kidney disease is a top issue for AAKP because it is extremely burdensome for patients and their families, and the Coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated patient concerns about safety and ongoing treatments. Kidneys Quest Foundation has wisely targeted their resources to fulfill an immediate need within the renal community and the role as a resource-link is highly commendable.“ Conway is a former home dialysis patient and current transplant recipient who serves as AAKP’s Liason to the CDC’s [Health Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee, \(HICPAC\)](#). HICPAC is a Federal Advisory Committee appointed to provide advice and guidance to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the CDC regarding infection control practices and strategies for surveillance, prevention, and control of healthcare-associated infections, antimicrobial resistance, and related events in care settings.

AAKP highlighted diabetic kidney disease as a priority issue throughout 2020 in all national virtual events and joined Dr. Susan Quaggin, President of the American Society of Nephrology (ASN), Director of the Feinberg Cardiovascular & Renal Research Institute, and Chief of Nephrology & Hypertension, Department of Medicine at Northwestern University, in an ASN-Diabetic Kidney Disease Collaborative webinar entitled “Management of Diabetes and Kidney Disease Through COVID-19” ([Recording](#)). Dr. Quaggin also provided the keynote presentation, “Diabetic Kidney Disease: News You Should Know” ([Watch OnDemand](#)), at the 2020 AAKP National Patient Meeting. AAKP 2020 national virtual event recordings are available online free of charge, including [AAKP’s Global Summit](#), hosted in partnership with The George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences, the [AAKP Policy Summit](#), and the [AAKP National Patient Meeting](#). All 2021 events will be hosted virtually, free of charge.

AAKP’s endowed safety award was created in 2014 by the Board of Directors of the former kidney Network of New England to continue the network’s safety initiatives led by Ms. Jenny Kitsen, a former member of the AAKP Board of Directors. Among the organizations eligible to apply for the Patient Safety Award are public institutions, government agencies, as well as 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(6) organizations. Prior recipients include The Forum of ESRD Networks, the American Nephrology Nurses Association, the Renal Physicians Association, Satellite Healthcare, and the CDC Making Dialysis Safer Coalition. A complete list of award recipients can be viewed at <https://aakp.org/programs-and-events/jenny-kitsen-patient-safety-grant/>.

AAKP has a long history of promoting patient safety and infection control efforts through its [Patient Safety Award program](#) and close collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). AAKP awarded its prestigious National Public Service Award to Dr. Priti Patel, former Dialysis Activity Leader within the Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion of the CDC ([January 2017 aakpRENALIFE article feature – Dr. Priti Patel](#)) and was a founding partner of the CDC Making Dialysis Safer Coalition in 2016. The CDC and AAKP co-branded [Conversation Starter to Prevent Infections in Dialysis Patients](#) provides guidance 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](#).

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Founded in 1969, AAKP is the largest and oldest fully independent kidney patient organization in America. Governed by a patient-majority Board, AAKP conducts national education programs designed to better inform kidney patients, care partners, and policymakers about the true impacts of kidney disease, prevention efforts, and treatment methods. AAKP executes a national advocacy strategy in conjunction with allied kidney organizations designed to insert the patient voice into proposed policies, research efforts, and care deliberations before the Executive Branch and the U.S. Congress. **Follow AAKP on social media at:** Facebook: @kidneypatient; Twitter and Instagram: @kidneypatients.