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LARGEST KIDNEY PATIENT GROUP TARGETS HIGH POTASSIUM THREAT WITH SECOND ANNUAL AWARENESS DAY

Tampa, FL – The American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP), the oldest and largest fully independent kidney patient organization in the U.S., hosted its second annual “**Are You O-K+**” campaign for **National High Potassium Awareness Day** on **May 1, 2021**. This 50-state educational campaign, driven by AAKP Ambassadors at the local level and online, increases awareness of the devastating effects [high potassium](#) (known as [hyperkalemia](#)) can have on individuals with advanced chronic kidney disease (CKD). It’s estimated that nearly three million people in the U.S. with CKD and/or heart failure are living with high potassium levels.

Potassium is an important mineral that plays a key role in controlling the function of nerves and muscles, particularly the heart. In a person without kidney disease, most of the extra potassium consumed in the diet is removed by the kidneys. In individuals with kidney disease, as kidney function declines, the body cannot get rid of excess potassium. If potassium levels become too high, an individual is diagnosed with hyperkalemia (high potassium), a serious and potentially life-threatening condition.

“In 2021, AAKP increased our reach and engagement with kidney patients, their medical teams, and our supporters throughout the kidney community. We accomplished this by using our highly effective social media platforms and grassroots networks. AAKP is proud that our undertaking to recognize May 1 (5.1) as National High Potassium Awareness Day continues to surge,” states Richard Knight, AAKP President and 14-year transplant recipient.

“For the second year running, we’re proud to continue our partnership with the AAKP in support of National High Potassium Day to raise awareness about potassium management among kidney and heart disease patients,” said Gregory Oakes, President North America, Vifor Pharma. “Today and every day, we’re committed to empowering patients to become better educated about their disease, and we strive to help patients lead better, healthier lives.”

Through AAKP’s expanding capacities under its Center for Patient Research and Education, this year’s AAKP “**Are You O-K+**” educational campaign [kicked off](#) in March 2021, during **National Kidney Disease Month**, and provided a series of educational resources for kidney patients, their family members, and healthcare professionals to better understand and communicate about potassium management. AAKP was also pleased to partner this year with Dr. Blake Shusterman, “The Cooking Doc,” and Dr. Todd

Berland, “Doctor Radio,” on SiriusXM radio, both nationally known experts in the renal community, to increase awareness of this serious condition and important day.

AAKP marked this year’s awareness day by hosting its annual “**Are You O-K+**” **educational webinar** on May 1, which is available to view [OnDemand](#). National High Potassium Awareness Day also featured educational posts throughout the day on social media: @areyouok5point1 on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

Educational resources on high potassium and kidney disease are available all year long at [www.areyouok.org](#). For more information on the “**Are You O-K+**” campaign, available educational resources, and a countdown to National High Potassium Awareness Day 2022, visit [www.areyouok.org](#) and follow us on social media.

For more information about AAKP’s educational and advocacy programs, visit [www.aakp.org](#), and join today as a **FREE member** at [www.aakp.org/join](#).

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Since 1969, AAKP has been a patient-led organization driving policy discussions on kidney patient consumer care choice and treatment innovation. By 1973, AAKP patients had collaborated with the U.S. Congress and White House to begin American dialysis coverage for any person suffering kidney failure, a taxpayer effort that has saved over one million lives. In 2018, AAKP established the largest U.S. kidney voter registration program, *KidneyVoters*™. Over the past decade, AAKP patients have helped gain lifetime transplant drug coverage for kidney transplant recipients (2020); new patient-centered policies via the White House *Executive Order on Advancing American Kidney Health* (2019); new job protections for living organ donors from the U.S. Department of Labor (2018); and Congressional legislation allowing HIV positive organ transplants for HIV positive patients (2013). Follow AAKP on social media at [@kidneypatient](#) on Facebook, [@kidneypatients](#) on Twitter, and [@kidneypatients](#) on Instagram, and visit [www.aakp.org](#).