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LARGEST KIDNEY PATIENT GROUP PREVIEWS FREE VIRTUAL CONVENTION

September 24-25, 2021, Event Showcases Kidney Patients Mobilizing for Innovation and Independence

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP), the largest independent patient-led kidney patient organization in the nation, previewed its upcoming 46th Annual National Patient Meeting today. The event is free, fully virtual, and offers expert education and advice from top leaders involved in the battle against kidney disease and efforts to expand global innovation, including the launch of artificial organs into consumer markets within the next ten years. The agenda for the meeting is available [here](#) and registration remains open throughout the event ([register online](#)). In 2019, AAKP declared 2020-2030 *The Decade of the Kidney*[™] (www.decadeofthekidney.org) to prioritize national and international government; academic, private individuals, and private sector investments in kidney disease research; and to support the development of new diagnostics, devices, and biologics to combat the disease. Since 2018, AAKP has been training patient advocates in policy analysis and grassroots tactics to support its *KidneyVoters*[™] initiative (<https://bit.ly/KidneyVoters>), the first and largest non-partisan voter registration effort in the kidney stakeholder community which aims to mobilize 500,000 *KidneyVoters*[™] by 2024.

The two-day interactive virtual meeting will feature a diverse line-up of speakers crossing all sectors of the kidney community including the top influencers in kidney care from Federal government, medical professionals, academia, private industry, and non-profit professional organizations. The event includes a variety of opportunities for participants to learn about [COVID-19](#) and the unique risks faced by kidney patients and immunocompromised organ transplant recipients; the latest in kidney research and treatment innovations; and learn from speakers from some of the most influential and consequential companies in the fields of kidney medicine. The AAKP virtual meeting platform allows patients to engage directly with sponsors, exhibitors, and fellow participants through a virtual sponsor hall, networking lounge, and virtual patient roundtable discussions.

The theme of this year's event, *Mobilizing for Innovation and Independence*, is a direct reflection of AAKP's position of being the leading independent and patient-led voice for greater investments and innovations in kidney disease research, detection, and treatment ([read here](#)). AAKP is nationally and internationally known for its aggressive advocacy on behalf of kidney patient consumers and their right to treatment care choice in consultation with the doctors who they choose to care for them. The Association defines high-quality kidney care as timely patient access, without interference, to prevention and treatment innovations that empower patients to remain healthy, independent, and able to pursue their life goals and aspirations including meaningful work and a career; home ownership; starting and supporting a family; and a secure retirement.

This year's event includes over 20 sessions and over a combined 60 [patient experts](#), government, medical, and industry speakers. Speakers include **Fokko Wieringa, PhD, (2021 KidneyX Artificial Kidney Prize Winner)**, Principal Scientist, IMEC, The Netherlands; Dutch Kidney Foundation; Member, The Kidney Health Initiative (EU); **Paul Palevsky, MD**, Deputy Director of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Kidney Disease

and Dialysis Program, Professor of Medicine, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and President of the National Kidney Foundation; **Ivonne H. Schulman, MD**, Program Director, Translational and Clinical Studies of Acute Kidney Injury; National Institutes of Health (NIH); National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK); Division of Kidney, Urologic and Hematologic Diseases (KUH); **Matt Diamond, MD, PhD, CMO**, Digital Health Center of Excellence, U.S. Food and Drug Administration; **Shannon Novosad, MD, MPH, LCDR**, Medical Officer, Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); **Robert Montgomery, MD, DPhil, FACS**, Chair of the Department of Surgery, Director of the NYU Langone Transplant Institute, Heart Transplant Recipient; **Shuvo Roy, PhD, (2021 KidneyX Artificial Kidney Prize Winner)**; Technical Director, The Kidney Project; Professor, Departments of Bioengineering and Therapeutics Sciences and Surgery; **David K.C. Cooper, MD, PhD, (2021 KidneyX Artificial Kidney Prize Winner)**, co-director, Xenotransplantation Program, University of Alabama, Birmingham School of Medicine; among other distinguished guest speakers. AAKP will also host four new Patient Advocacy and Engagement Training sessions. The new advocacy training programs include: how to be an effective participant in clinical trials and research efforts conducted by Scott Toner, President and Founder, BridgeView Strategies, former AAKP Board Member; how to engage more patients in the *KidneyVoters*TM initiative conducted by AAKP's Erin Kahle, MPA, CNP, Director of Patient Insights, Data Analytics, and Advocacy; how to share your story to support identifying a living organ donor, conducted by AAKP Ambassador Risa Simon, Founder, TransplantFirst Academy and preemptive transplant recipient; and the top ten things to know to be effective on camera from Zoom to media interviews, featuring both Jonathan St. John, Owner/Senior Editor of Briar Patch Media, LLC and AAKP's national strategist media advisor, and AAKP's Jennifer Rate, Marketing and Communications Manager.

Following the meeting, all general and training sessions from the 2021 Patient Meeting will be available OnDemand through the [AAKP website](#) and [AAKP YouTube channel](#).

AAKP President Richard Knight, a former hemodialysis patient and current 14-year transplant recipient stated, "For over fifty years, AAKP has led the fight for greater innovation in kidney medicine by organizing kidney patients at the grassroots level and by strategically engaging them in research, product development, and policy. Our Annual Patient Meeting showcases the importance of kidney patient consumers, their unique insights, and their expanding voice in the legislative, regulatory, and payment decisions that impact both their care choices and health outcomes. As staunch believers in the power of individuals and private sector partners to develop care solutions, we appreciate our expanding base of individual donors and major sponsors, whose support is used to provide substantive educational programming and advocacy skill training." [Knight](#) is a small business consultant and business strategy instructor at Bowie State University (BSU) as well as a former Congressional staff member and liaison to the Congressional Black Caucus.

AAKP Secretary and Chair of the National Patient Meeting Dale Rogers, former dialysis patient and current transplant recipient stated, "Kidney disease poses a significant health and economic challenge to the nation, kidney patient consumers, and their families. Current disease treatments, especially in-center dialysis, represent outdated technologies and patient consumers have grown increasingly dissatisfied with a status quo system marked by late detection and high mortality. The AAKP National Patient Meeting is an optimistic event that introduces patients and families to new ways to assert greater leadership in their own care and in the global effort to speed life-saving treatments." [Rogers](#) also serves as an AAKP National Ambassador from the state of Idaho.

AAKP thanks the 2021 National Patient Meeting Sponsors for their generous support that allowed the AAKP to host this year's virtual meeting and also waive the cost of registration, providing full access of this event to everyone. Platinum Sponsors include Baxter International, Becton Dickson and Company, CareDx, Horizon Therapeutics, Medtronic, Natera, Otsuka Pharmaceuticals, and Sanofi Genzyme. Gold Sponsors include Akebia Therapeutics, Amgen, AstraZeneca, and Novartis. Silver sponsors include Traverre Therapeutics and Vifor Pharma. Bronze Sponsors include Aurinia Pharmaceuticals, Bayer Pharmaceuticals, CVS Kidney Care, Reata Pharmaceuticals, and Vertex Pharmaceuticals. Patron Sponsors include Humacyte, Outset Medical, and Palladio Biosciences.

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About the American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP): 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.