



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 28, 2022

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Jennifer Rate
Marketing and Communications Manager

(813) 400-2394
jrate@aakp.org

CAMPAIGN TARGETS HIGH POTASSIUM THREAT TO KIDNEY PATIENTS

PATIENTS KICK OFF “ARE YOU O-K+?” CAMPAIGN FOR HIGH POTASSIUM AWARENESS DAY ON MAY 1

Washington, D.C. – The American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP), the oldest and largest fully-independent kidney patient consumer organization in the USA, is putting a national spotlight on the devastating impacts of high potassium (hyperkalemia) on individuals with advanced chronic kidney disease (CKD) on [National High Potassium Awareness Day, May 1, 2022](#). Close to three million people in the U.S. with CKD and/or heart failure live with high potassium levels. [AAKP will conduct its](#) Annual [“Are You O-K+”](#) campaign through AAKP’s Center for Patient Education and Research for the third year. The campaign utilizes AAKP’s sophisticated global and nation social media platforms to reach millions of Americans who are at risk for hyperkalemia.

In 2019, AAKP launched The [Decade of the Kidney™](#) to organize greater awareness of kidney-related issues and the overwhelming need for transformative innovations in kidney drugs, diagnostics, and devices to prevent and treat the advancement of kidney diseases and potential kidney failure. The “Are You O-K+” effort is a central element of that initiative and engages kidney patients, care partners, allied medical professional associations, and the larger kidney community. AAKP advocates for streamlined clinical trials, greater involvement of patients and their unique patient insight data, real-world evidence, and patient-reported outcome data in the approval and launch of safe, new kidney innovations. For 2022, AAKP is working to remove burdensome and unnecessary barriers to patient consumer access to safe, U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved kidney therapies and devices, erected insurers, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicare Services (CMS).

AAKP will be hosting a **FREE virtual educational “Are You O-K+” event** on Friday, April 29, 2022, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. ET. Register at www.areyouok.org or [click here](#). The virtual event will include educational presentations, kidney-friendly cooking tips, a sneak peek of the new *AAKP Delicious!* sixth edition recipe set, patient stories about the impact and importance of potassium management, and much more. Individuals who register for the April 29 virtual event will receive a digital set of *AAKP Delicious!* sixth edition recipes! The virtual event will be available OnDemand after April 29 for enduring education.

Potassium is found naturally in many foods such as fruits and vegetables and high concentrations in some processed foods and juices like tomato juice and fruit juice. It 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 eaten in the diet is removed by the kidneys, but when kidney function decreases to a

certain level, the body cannot get rid of excess potassium. If potassium levels become too high (for example, if too much potassium is taken in and kidney function is not good enough to remove the extra potassium, or if potassium levels rise due to certain medications), then an individual is diagnosed with hyperkalemia, a serious and potentially life-threatening condition.

The “**Are You O-K+**” campaign utilizes the scientific symbol of potassium “K+” with a popular message, “Are You Ok,” to encourage individuals with kidney diseases to know their potassium level. The safe range for blood potassium level is under 5.1 (3.5 -5.0 mEq/L). Levels of 5.1 and higher may indicate hyperkalemia, making May 1 (5.1) the key time for this annual awareness day. Educational resources about high potassium and kidney disease are available in English and Spanish at www.areyouok.org.

“Since 2020, AAKP has been educating millions of people about the risks of hyperkalemia and the availability of innovative treatments to prevent the most devastating impact of this condition. For 2022, AAKP continues to vigorously expand our reach and educational products so kidney patients, their medical teams, and our allies across the kidney community can support this national grassroots movement to continue to mark May 1 (5.1) as National High Potassium Awareness Day,” [Richard Knight](#), AAKP President and 15-year transplant recipient, said. “We are honored to lead this awareness day campaign for the last three years, and we appreciate our ongoing educational partnership with founding sponsor Vifor Pharma and supporting sponsor AstraZeneca.”

“For the third year running, we are proud to partner with the AAKP to engage and mobilize kidney patients, care partners, medical professional associations, and the broader kidney community to increase awareness of the effects high potassium can have on people with advanced chronic kidney disease,” Molly Painter, U.S. President of Vifor Pharma, said.

“As a company dedicated to improving the lives of people living with and at risk of developing chronic kidney disease, AstraZeneca is proud to partner with the AAKP on National High Potassium Awareness Day. It’s imperative for patients to learn about potassium so they can feel empowered and make informed decisions about their health to improve their quality of life,” said Lina Florén-Smith, Executive Director, Marketing, AstraZeneca.

For more information on the “**Are You O-K+**” campaign and the available educational resources, visit www.areyouok.org. Get involved on social media and help spread the word by downloading the [campaign toolkit](#) and following us on [Facebook @areyouok5point1](#), [Instagram @areyouok5point1](#), and [Twitter @areyouok5point1](#). For more information about AAKP’s educational and advocacy programs, visit www.aakp.org or join today as a FREE member at www.aakp.org/join.

###

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 and [@kidneypatients](#) on Twitter, and visit www.aakp.org for more information.