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## HIGH POTASSIUM THREAT TARGETED BY KIDNEY PATIENTS

### Third Annual National Awareness Day Smashes Records for Engagement

**Tampa, FL** – The American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP), the oldest and largest fully independent kidney patient organization in the U.S., hosted its third annual “**Are You O-K+**” campaign for **National High Potassium Awareness Day on May 1**. The 50-state educational campaign, executed by AAKP Ambassadors at the local level and online, increased awareness of the devastating effects of [high potassium](#) (known as [hyperkalemia](#)) on individuals with advanced chronic kidney disease (CKD). Nearly three million people with CKD and/or heart failure in the U.S. are estimated to be living with high potassium levels. The campaign exceeded an AAKP public education record set in 2021, with tens of thousands of participants engaged virtually and an overall 279 percent increase over 2021 online engagement.

AAKP is a national leader in providing patients and families with high quality and timely kidney disease education programming and has produced over 20 [educational webinars](#) in the past 24 months. 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. As kidney function declines in individuals with kidney disease, 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 2022, AAKP broke all prior records for online and community reach and engagement with kidney patients, their medical teams, and our supporters throughout the kidney community. We accomplished this through an updated array of sophisticated and integrated social media tools and our rapidly growing grassroots network. High potassium is a topic of great concern to those suffering from kidney diseases, and it was easy to convert patient insights on these concerns into a popular and nationally known awareness day. AAKP is proud that our undertaking to recognize National High Potassium Awareness Day continues to surge, not only on May 1 (5.1), but all year round,” stated [Richard Knight](#), AAKP President, former dialysis patient, and current 15-year transplant recipient.

“We are proud to continue our collaboration with the AAKP in support of National High Potassium Day to raise awareness about potassium management among the kidney community,” said Molly Painter, U.S. President of Vifor Pharma. “Today and every day, we’re committed to empowering people living with kidney disease with additional knowledge to manage their condition, including the impacts of high potassium.”

“AstraZeneca is proud to partner with the AAKP on National High Potassium Awareness Day to ensure patients understand their risks and have comprehensive and accessible resources to manage their potassium,” said Lina Florén-Smith, Executive Director, Marketing, AstraZeneca.

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 2022 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 marked this year’s awareness day by hosting its annual **“Are You O-K+”** virtual education event on April 29, 2022, which is now available to view OnDemand at <https://bit.ly/AAKPAreYouOKEvent22>. National High Potassium Awareness Day also featured educational posts throughout the day on social media: **@areyouok5point1** on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

AAKP was also pleased to release 12 new kidney-friendly recipes under its popular **AAKP Delicious!** program as part of the 2022 campaign. Each recipe is available for free as a [downloadable PDF](#). This sixth edition recipe set can also be purchased at [www.aakp.org/shop](http://www.aakp.org/shop). Cooking video tutorials on each recipe from this edition are also available on AAKP’s [YouTube](#) channel: <https://bit.ly/AAKPOnDemand>.

Educational resources on high potassium and kidney disease are available all year long at <http://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 2023, visit <http://www.areyouok.org/> and follow us on social media. For more information on AAKP’s educational and advocacy programs, visit <http://www.aakp.org/>, and join today as a **FREE member** at [www.aakp.org/join](http://www.aakp.org/join).

This year’s “Are You O-K+” campaign was proudly supported by an educational donation by Vifor Pharma and AstraZeneca.

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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](http://www.aakp.org) for more information.