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## **2025 World Kidney Day Statement**

### **American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP)**

**Washington, D.C.:** As the largest and oldest fully independent kidney patient organization in the United States, the American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP) proudly raises our voice alongside fellow kidney patients, their families, and the medical teams they trust across the globe on World Kidney Day. This year, the sponsors of World Kidney Day have mirrored a theme AAKP has advanced for several decades, *"Are Your Kidneys OK? Detect early, protect kidney health."*

We believe advocacy for early detection and protection of kidneys is a fundamentally important goal for all people of goodwill. Kidney disease is a threat to every person. The disease steals innocent lives, denies people their livelihoods, and poses substantial costs to taxpayers, healthcare systems, and society. Fortunately, today, there are highly effective screening and diagnostic tools available that empower patients and medical professionals with the ability to identify and intervene early in the disease cycle. Within many nations, patients now have access to innovative drugs that have been proven to slow and stop disease progression, prevent organ failure, and halt the inevitable decline toward dialysis and years awaiting an organ transplant.

There is little dispute that early detection and intervention saves lives and reduces costs. Yet, sadly, in many countries, the decision to move forward on common sense screening recommendations is often left to panels of government-appointed medical and policy experts with minimal professional training in kidney care and even less exposure to kidney patients and their unique lived experiences. We strongly encourage elected and appointed policymakers in every nation, and at every level, to elevate kidney patients, patient insights, and the expertise of both kidney and transplant professionals in all decisions related to kidney care and to be less reliant on advisors ignorant of the true costs of this disease. More people will be able to say their kidneys are "OK" when political leaders act boldly and put forward patient-centered policies, under their own signature, that emphasize kidney care innovation, patient consumer care choice, and the inherent dignity of every life, including those impacted by this disease.

During this Decade of the Kidney™, we celebrate the efforts of researchers and scientists working to develop better understandings of kidney disease pathways and precision treatments. We are optimistic in regard to advancements in home dialysis and are buoyed by the tremendous progress being made on artificial wearable and implantable kidneys and xenotransplantation. As these innovations progress through clinical trials, we encourage all kidney stakeholders, especially our fellow patients, to impart their sense of urgency to government regulators and all payers so that new treatment choices become available and more lives can be saved.

We also take this opportunity to convey what kidney patients say is “NOT OK.” When governments, either knowingly or unwittingly, interfere with the best interests and outcomes of kidney patients, their actions should be labeled as Government Determinants of Health (GDoH) and reversed. Governments and health experts must avoid “green kidney care” recommendations that make patients feel burdensome to society or guilty for choosing lifesaving dialysis treatments that require water, power, and disposable supplies. Instead of manipulating patients to forgo kidney treatments and end their lives prematurely, governments should embrace new care innovations that help patients live and achieve their aspirations. Finally, on World Kidney Day, we extend our heartfelt empathy and strongest hopes to all kidney patients living under totalitarian regimes, like Iran and communist China, indelibly marked by and inextricably linked to the unethical practices of organ commoditization, transplant tourism, and forced organ harvesting from persecuted people. AAKP envisions the day when all kidney patients across the globe can exercise freedom of care choice, access life-saving treatments, and enjoy better opportunities to live a meaningful and rewarding life as they define it – absent the label of disease.

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