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NORTHWEST KIDNEY CENTERS WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE WASHINGTON DEATH WITH DIGNITY ACT

Seattle, WA--Last November, voters adopted Initiative 1000, better known as the Washington State Death with Dignity Act. The act takes effect March 5. Northwest Kidney Centers has determined that it will *not* participate in the act and will *not* assist in a patient's request for a lethal dose of life-ending medication.

Specifically, this means that:

- NKC physicians, employees, independent contractors and volunteers will not assist a patient by providing life-ending medication on NKC premises or in property owned by NKC.
- NKC employees will not assist a patient in ending his or her life as defined by the act in a hospital that contracts with NKC for staffing.
- The NKC Pharmacy will not dispense life-ending medication intended for the patient to self-administer.

The Death with Dignity Act is clear that no health care provider, including Northwest Kidney Centers, is required to assist a qualified patient in ending his or her own life under the act. Our mission and values do not support dispensing medication and actively participating in ending a patient's life.

NKC employees and physicians will respond to a patient's questions about life-ending medication with openness and compassion. Social workers are available to discuss the patient's concerns, unmet needs, feelings and desires about the process of dying. Ultimately, Northwest Kidney Centers' goal is to help patients make informed decisions about end-of-life care.

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Northwest Kidney Centers, established in 1962 as the world's first out-of-hospital dialysis facility, is a model for saving and sustaining the lives of people with chronic kidney disease, focusing on improving the quality of patients' lives. A not-for-profit organization, Northwest Kidney Centers provides personalized care for patients in the

Puget Sound region. The organization is the central community resource for kidney disease prevention, treatment and education. A world pioneer in home dialysis, Northwest Kidney Centers is dedicated to developing innovative treatment options and promoting research to find the cure for chronic kidney disease. For more information, see www.nwkidney.org.

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