



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **NKC joins in PEAK campaign to improve first year on dialysis**

SEATTLE, WA (July 31, 2009)—“At Northwest Kidney Centers, we know that one of the best things we can do to save lives is to help people get prepared for dialysis,” says president and CEO Joyce F. Jackson.

For that reason, Northwest Kidney Centers is a partner in a voluntary national dialysis quality improvement campaign launched in June 2009 by Kidney Care Partners. The campaign is called Performance Excellence and Accountability in Kidney Care (PEAK), and its main goal is to help people through the challenges of their first year on dialysis. To do that, PEAK will focus on patient education and key clinical care activities.

The patients who do best at the beginning of dialysis, according to Jackson, are those who:

- are diagnosed with kidney disease early so that they have time to consider what they will do in the event their kidneys stop functioning entirely.
- get education about the treatment options for kidney failure.
- begin dialysis with access to the vascular system through a mature graft or fistula, which lessens the risk of infection.

NKC has provided new patient education for more than 20 years, with a nurse educator assigned to each arriving dialysis patient.

To reach people just approaching kidney failure, NKC developed a two-hour class called Choices. It covers various forms of dialysis, kidney transplant, and how to prepare for them.

Of patients who attended the Choices class and started dialysis in 2008:

- 64 percent had fistulas in place at time of first treatment, compared to 25 percent of non-attendees.

- 45 percent had fistulas in use at first run, compared to 23 percent of non-attendees.
- 22 percent started on peritoneal dialysis, compared to 8 percent of non-attendees.

NKC is working now to encourage nephrologists to refer more patients to the class. Currently only 11 percent of patients take it before beginning dialysis.

Nationwide over the past 10 years, end-stage renal disease (ESRD) survival rates have improved; however, for patients in the first year of dialysis, the survival rate has remained the same—about 70 percent. At NKC, the one-year survival rate was 78 percent in 2007, the most recent year tallied.

Learn more about the PEAK campaign at <http://adesignprojects.com/Assets/KCP-Peak/AboutPeak.htm>.