



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Northwest Kidney Centers celebrates 50th anniversary

**U.S. House of Representatives and Gov. Christine Gregoire
recognize milestone**

Seattle, WA (Jan. 30, 2012): Throughout 2012 nonprofit [Northwest Kidney Centers](#) is celebrating its [50th anniversary](#) as the world's first dialysis organization. The largest community-based, nonprofit [dialysis](#) provider in the United States, Northwest Kidney Centers has grown into a leader in patient care, education and research, changing the face of care for kidney disease in the United States and worldwide.

On Jan. 13 Washington Gov. Christine Gregoire issued a congratulatory proclamation, and on Jan. 27, U.S. Rep. Jim McDermott (D-WA) of Seattle introduced a resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives recognizing Northwest Kidney Centers' 50th anniversary and the contributions the nonprofit organization has made. Co-sponsors are Reps. Dave Reichert (R-WA), Norm Dicks (D-WA), Adam Smith (D-WA) and Jay Inslee (D-WA), each of whom represents a Washington district where Northwest Kidney Centers operates.

"We are deeply grateful to Rep. McDermott for sponsoring the resolution. As cofounder of the bipartisan Congressional Kidney Caucus, he has long been a champion for people with kidney disease," said Joyce F. Jackson, president and CEO of Northwest Kidney Centers. "We thank Gov. Gregoire and the co-sponsoring members of Congress as well for recognizing that Northwest Kidney Centers' 50th anniversary marks a significant milestone in health care nationwide."

Both the resolution and the proclamation recognize significant steps in the creation and development of Northwest Kidney Centers:

In 1960, University of Washington researcher [Dr. Belding Scribner](#) created the [Scribner Shunt](#), a medical device that allowed people to live indefinitely with repeated dialysis. As a result, community leaders came together to raise money and find space so Northwest Kidney Centers could open its doors in Seattle on Jan. 8, 1962. That made Northwest Kidney Centers the first

organization in the world established to deliver dialysis treatments outside of a hospital.

Last year it served nearly 1,500 patients in 14 dialysis centers and 11 local hospitals, and trained and supported 200 patients who give themselves dialysis at home. All together the organization provided 226,000 dialysis treatments to patients in 2011. With a staff of 565, Northwest Kidney Centers is the largest dialysis provider in King and Clallam counties. It treats 78 percent of the people in its service area who require dialysis.

Throughout its history Northwest Kidney Centers has taken the lead on new developments in the field, for example, carrying out the first clinical trial and the first test in a human patient of Amgen's anti-anemia drug Epogen, and establishing the Northwest Organ Procurement Agency, the second such area-wide agency in the country helping to facilitate transplants.

Northwest Kidney Centers established the country's first non-hospital retail [pharmacy](#) specializing in medications for kidney patients. It operates unique special care units – with intensive nursing service and beds for very frail patients – to help avoid hospitalizations and save costs.

As Northwest Kidney Centers has matured, the rate of chronic kidney disease has grown. It's now an epidemic, affecting one in seven American adults.

That makes it even more important that Northwest Kidney Centers remains close to its community roots and gives back to the communities it serves. Each year Northwest Kidney Centers invests \$3 million in the community – to provide services for pre-dialysis patients and transplant recipients, fund training for kidney physicians, offer educational scholarships for patients and staff, assist with transportation, medications and nutritional supplements, fund charity care, and make emergency grants for patients in crisis.

From the beginning Northwest Kidney Centers has been guided by volunteer leaders and supported financially by generous donors. In 2008, thanks to donor support, Northwest Kidney Centers provided seed funding for a new collaboration with [UW Medicine](#) to create the [Kidney Research Institute](#). The institute has already become an established scientific leader, focusing on better ways to prevent, detect, treat, and eventually cure kidney disease.

Northwest Kidney Centers is regularly recognized by academic and professional groups as a model for the field of kidney care, most recently receiving the 2010 Washington State Hospital Association Community Health Leadership Award. It is internationally renowned in the field of home dialysis training and support, and it operates one of the largest home dialysis programs in the United States.

Northwest Kidney Centers educates the public about kidney disease and organ donation, offering free public health classes on treatment options and

good nutrition, and participating in dozens of outreach events annually to reach people at risk for kidney disease.

“As we celebrate Northwest Kidney Centers’ first half-century of service, we thank all those who have faced kidney disease with dedication and bravery,” Jackson said. “We look forward to many new firsts for our patients. And we hope the benefits of our work continue to spread across the country and around the world.”

Northwest Kidney Centers keeps people in western Washington alive with dialysis therapy, educates the public about kidney health, and collaborates with UW Medicine in the Kidney Research Institute. Northwest Kidney Centers is the largest community based, nonprofit dialysis provider in the country. Founded in 1962 in Seattle, it was the first out-of-hospital dialysis program in the world, and it is still a model in the field. Its mission remains critical. One in seven American adults has chronic kidney disease, up 30 percent in the last decade. For more information, visit www.nwkidney.org.

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