



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Locally-Run Nonprofit Dialysis Providers Form Alliance To Improve Patient Care**

SEATTLE, Wash. (Oct. 31, 2013) – Two of Western Washington’s premier community-based, nonprofit kidney dialysis organizations have established a “quality alliance” to provide the best possible health care to patients with serious kidney problems. They are Seattle-based Northwest Kidney Centers, which serves patients in King and Clallam counties, and Everett-based Puget Sound Kidney Centers, which serves patients in Snohomish, Island and (in 2014) Skagit counties.

As a result of the parties’ common values, goals and aligned history – each in operation for more than three decades – the alliance provides for mutual sharing of clinical knowledge, expertise and experience, as well as clinical protocols. The goals are enhanced patient care, safety and engagement within both organizations, and increased collaboration among medical staff and medical leadership.

“The landscape of dialysis is changing,” said Northwest Kidney Centers’ chief executive officer and president, Joyce F. Jackson. “We are already living with Medicare’s dialysis “pay for quality” initiative. We envision new health care delivery structures on the horizon like renal accountable care organizations and expanded bundled reimbursements to include oral drugs taken by our patients. We need to adapt to these industry-wide shifts to be certain that patients can continue to benefit from care at locally-run, independent dialysis programs.”

Harold S. Kelly, chief executive officer and president of Puget Sound Kidney Centers, commented, “This alliance is all about improving patient care. Puget Sound Kidney Centers believes that it’s essential to build long-term relationships based on trust, and we believe this alliance and collaborative approach with Northwest Kidney Centers formalizes our mutual focus on improved care for all patients. We also believe this alliance will improve prospects for transplantation and chronic kidney disease (CKD) services.” The alliance is not a merger and does not change the governance, management, purchasing, contracting or financial independence of either organization. Neither organization plans to reduce services or staff as a result of the alliance.

[More than 70 percent](#) of all dialysis treatments in the United States are provided by two large for-profit corporations. Nonprofit, community-based providers like Puget Sound Kidney Centers and Northwest Kidney Centers are able to focus on patient care and community benefits rather than return to shareholders, and they provide an important choice and alternative for consumers.

[Northwest Kidney Centers](#) serves 1,535 patients with 286 dialysis stations in 15 dialysis facilities. It also provides treatments in 11 hospitals and supervises 270 patients (17 percent) who give themselves dialysis at home. It was the world's first and only outpatient dialysis organization when it was founded in 1962.

[Puget Sound Kidney Centers](#) serves more than 500 patients, 11 percent of them on home dialysis. It has four dialysis centers in operation and two under construction. When the two new centers are completed in summer of 2014, Puget Sound Kidney Centers will offer 110 dialysis stations. It also provides acute treatments in three area hospitals. Puget Sound Kidney Centers began operations in 1981.

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