

# Community Connection

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## One family pays it forward

To show their gratitude for the care and support their family received, Ed and Katherine Boersma became donors to Northwest Kidney Centers. Their two children, Ellen and Mark, both had kidney disease as youngsters, in the era before Medicare coverage for dialysis was universal.

One of the first times Ed took Ellen to Northwest Kidney Centers for treatment, he had a handful of medical bills that he wasn't able to pay, and the debts weighed on him heavily. A staff member asked Ed for the bills, telling him, "We'll take care of those."

From then on, with the burden lifted, Ed was able to focus on supporting his wife and children.

"Having Northwest Kidney Centers and all the medical help they offered us was better care than we could have dreamed of getting anywhere else. We stayed strong for our children, and Northwest Kidney Centers stayed strong for us," Katherine would later say.



Ellen Barker, pictured here with her parents, Katherine and Ed Boersma, was an early dialysis patient. Her family's experience with Northwest Kidney Centers had a profound effect on both their lives and legacies.

Before Katherine passed away in December 2015, five years after Ed, she included a generous bequest in her will for Northwest Kidney Centers. Ellen and Mark added to their parents' gift this past November to create the Ed and Katherine Boersma Family Endowment Fund.

The Boersma family endowment will support charity care, providing help such as Ed and Katherine received more than 40 years ago.

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If you'd like to create a lasting tribute to a loved one through a permanent endowment fund, please contact:

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# Care Better — New ways to help patients live well

We're always on the lookout for ways to improve, especially when patient health and safety are concerned. Care Better is a pillar of our strategic plan. Here are some recent examples:

## » Coordinating care with hospitals

People with serious kidney disease often have other medical conditions that can send them to the hospital. We now get notified whenever one of our patients is admitted to a hospital or visits an emergency room anywhere in Washington so we can begin sharing information immediately.

And when a patient leaves the hospital, we coordinate care with hospital staff to be sure the patient has all the support needed for a safe return to everyday life, including timely dialysis treatments, a review of medications, and home help. Northwest Kidney Centers patients are readmitted to hospitals 7 percent less often than the national rate.



Home hemodialysis nurse John Vandermay reviews a patient's medications after a hospital discharge.



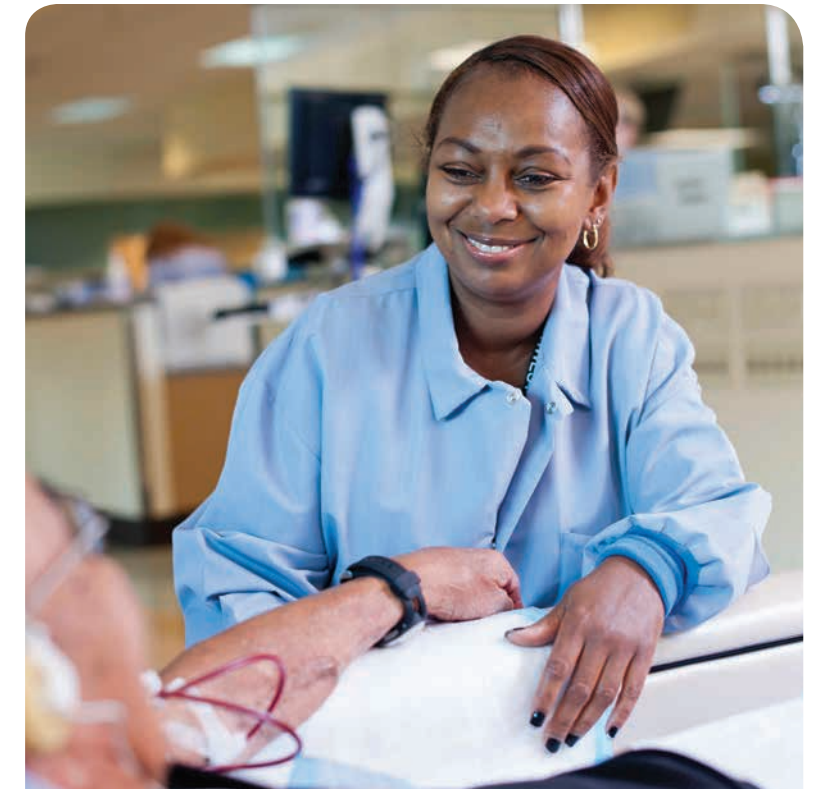
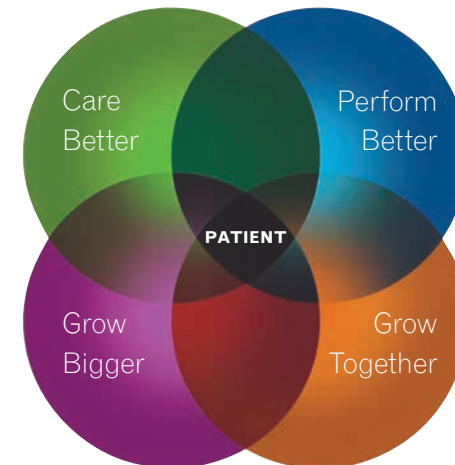
No more home treatment logs for PD patient David Lum. A new, smart PD cyclor will keep records for him.

## » Improving peritoneal dialysis

Thanks to new equipment, our peritoneal dialysis patients will have a safer and easier time with their home treatments. We're transitioning to machines with two-way, remote connectivity, which allows our care teams to follow patient treatments in real time and respond quickly. Previously, patients sent in paper or electronic logs of their treatment data. This new process is better for patients and staff.

## » Enhancing our culture of care with empathy

All staff members are attending four-hour workshops by Navos Mental Health Solutions to learn how to deal compassionately and safely with patients or others who may be acting out in a dialysis clinic or other Northwest Kidney Centers facility.



Dialysis technician Nina Cheatham with a patient at Northwest Kidney Centers' Renton clinic. Every staff member will complete training on care with empathy.



## Where to find stellar dialysis? Check out Dialysis Facility Compare

Dialysis Facility Compare, a website managed by Medicare, helps people find and compare providers across the country. It's a great tool if you're looking for a dialysis clinic nearby, planning a trip or just curious about how your clinic stacks up.

Northwest Kidney Centers facilities are rated an average 4.3 stars out of 5 possible, highest in the state of Washington. Comparisons are based on patient outcomes, hospitalizations, management of anemia, vascular access and management of bone disease. You can also find information such as hours of operation and number of stations.

In case you're wondering: In 2016, Northwest Kidney Centers served 66 visiting patients with 198 treatments.



### Investing in a valuable asset, our staff

Northwest Kidney Centers' employee scholarship program helps staff members continue their education and grow in their careers. Generous support from the community helps keep our staff motivated and expanding their skills. Since the program started in 2011, 41 staff members have received more than \$60,000 in scholarships. This year's recipients, from left:

- Yulia Petrenko, patient accounts representative  
Alene G. "Pat" Farr, RN Employee Scholarship  
Northwest Kidney Centers Employee Scholarship
- Lucy Kim, dialysis technician  
Salal Credit Union Scholarship
- Tammera A. Ferguson, patient accounts representative  
Northwest Kidney Centers Employee Scholarship
- Colleen Pollock, dialysis technician  
Boeschoten Foundation Employee Scholarship  
Northwest Kidney Centers Employee Scholarship
- Lori Graham, registered dietitian  
Northwest Kidney Centers Employee Scholarship

Not pictured:

- Adrian Fomby, admitting and patient services supervisor  
Boeschoten Foundation Employee Scholarship
- Heather Johnson, nurse manager  
Martha Alger Jasper Memorial Scholarship  
Northwest Kidney Centers Employee Scholarship

'Northwest Kidney Centers was always there for my mom and that's why we donate. Dialysis gave us three and a half more years with her that we wouldn't have had.'



Claudia Holzberger first learned about Northwest Kidney Centers when her mother, Rita, was diagnosed with kidney disease in her late 70s. Claudia and her husband, Frank, have been supporters in our Silver Lining Society since 2011.

### Consider the Silver Lining Society

Looking for a safe, secure and convenient way to support Northwest Kidney Centers on a regular basis? Consider joining the Silver Lining Society.

Through recurring gifts, Silver Lining Society members ensure that patients have everything they need to reach their best possible outcomes. Silver Lining members contribute in amounts that are meaningful to them, from \$10 a month and upward.

As a Silver Lining Society member, you are in total control: increase, decrease or stop your gift at any time. We'll charge your credit or debit card, or debit your bank account, monthly or quarterly on the schedule you choose.



To set up your recurring gift, visit:

[www.nwkidney.org](http://www.nwkidney.org)

Or contact:

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### Get the e-version of Community Connection

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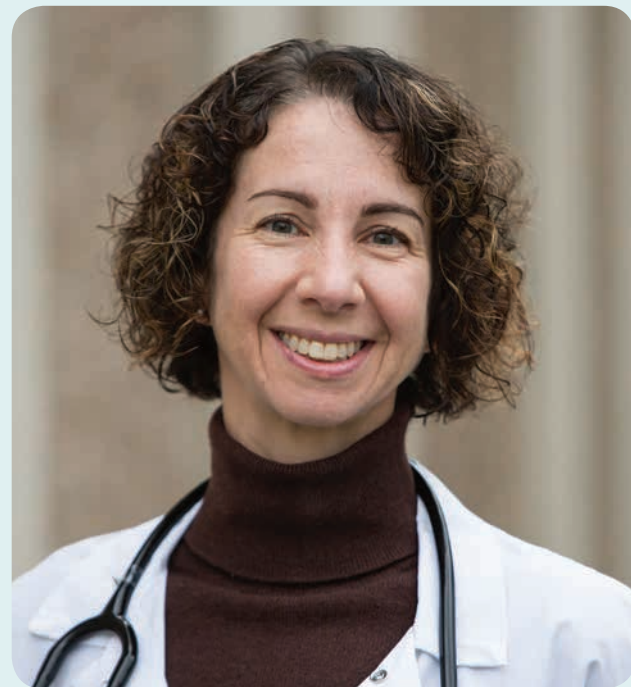
## Dr. Suzanne Watnick becomes chief medical officer

Nationally known nephrologist Dr. Suzanne Watnick is Northwest Kidney Centers' new chief medical officer (CMO). Dr. Bonnie Collins, who has served as interim CMO, is now associate CMO, reporting to Dr. Watnick.

Prior to joining Northwest Kidney Centers Jan. 1, Dr. Watnick was acting division chief of nephrology at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Portland. She also served as medical director of the VA's dialysis unit for 14 years and began the home dialysis program; about 20 percent of VA patients dialyze at home.

"What I noticed first and foremost," said Dr. Watnick, "was Northwest Kidney Centers' commitment to patients at every level. This commitment was made clear from walking the clinic floors to talking to the executive team to the way clinics are set up. Northwest Kidney Centers gives not just excellent, but premier patient care, with a commitment to cutting-edge research and consistent innovation."

Dr. Watnick did undergraduate work at Harvard and received her medical degree from University of Massachusetts Medical School. She completed her residency at University of California San Francisco and a nephrology fellowship at Yale.



Dr. Suzanne Watnick

## Discovery Gala reaches new heights in support of kidney research

More than 470 donors and friends came out to support Northwest Kidney Centers and kidney research at the Discovery Gala Oct. 29 at the Bellevue Hyatt Regency. The event broke records for attendance and fundraising—nearly \$750,000 raised to support vital research into kidney disease. Thank you to our generous community of supporters for bringing hope for a brighter future to our patients and their families!



**Save the date for the 2017 Discovery Gala: Saturday, Oct. 28**



Dr. Ian de Boer

## Research points to long-term approach to diabetic kidney disease

Diabetic kidney disease has changed over the last generation, according to Dr. Ian de Boer, an investigator at the Kidney Research Institute, Northwest Kidney Centers' collaboration with UW Medicine. He was an author of research on the topic published in 2016 in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney disease, accounting for half of all new cases. Between one quarter and one half of people with diabetes have some level of kidney disease.

"What we found was a little surprising and a little complex," de Boer said. "The 'typical' signs of diabetic kidney disease found in older textbooks and literature may no longer be typical. We're seeing different clinical presentations than in the past."

Generally, two signs identify kidney disease: albuminuria (elevated protein in the urine) and reduced eGFR (filtration of wastes).

For the last 30 years, the prevalence of diabetic kidney disease has stayed about the same. However, over that time, albuminuria cases have decreased and reduced eGFR cases have risen. In short, though diabetic kidney disease levels remained constant, the characteristics of the disease itself seem to have changed.

"These findings tie into the National Institute of Health's initiative to look at genetics and biomarkers and other factors to understand what's going on in individuals and to target therapies to individuals," de Boer said.

"We want to understand more than a person's albuminuria status and eGFR. We want to understand a person's underlying biologic processes so we can target therapies to them."



## Raising awareness of kidney disease

We're out and about in the community, sponsoring events that help people learn how to fend off kidney disease.

Sunday, March 26 at Safeco Field we'll sponsor the National Kidney Foundation's inaugural Seattle Kidney Walk. We'll have a booth and a team, and you are welcome to join us. There's no registration fee and no requirement to raise money (but prizes are available if you do). Doors open at 9 a.m. and a one-mile walk on the flat, indoor main concourse begins at 10 a.m. Register at [www.kidneywalk.org](http://www.kidneywalk.org).

Diabetes is the leading cause of chronic kidney disease, so we also support the American Diabetes Association. Northwest Kidney Centers and the ADA collaborated this fall to provide a free education and support program called "Type 2 and You" for people in South King County, where local rates of diabetes are highest. We're getting a team together again for the ADA's Tour de Cure bike ride and walk on May 21 at Chateau Ste. Michelle.





## Mark your calendar

### **National Kidney Foundation Seattle Kidney Walk**

Sunday, March 26  
Safeco Field  
Seattle

### **Northwest Kidney Centers Breakfast of Hope**

Tuesday, May 16  
Westin Seattle

### **American Diabetes Association Tour de Cure**

Sunday, May 21  
Chateau Ste. Michelle  
Woodinville



[www.nwkidney.org](http://www.nwkidney.org)  
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**Pharmacy:** 206-343-4870 or 1-800-947-8902

Northwest Kidney Centers promotes the optimal health, quality of life and independence of people with kidney disease through patient care, education and research.



NORTHWEST

**Kidney Centers**

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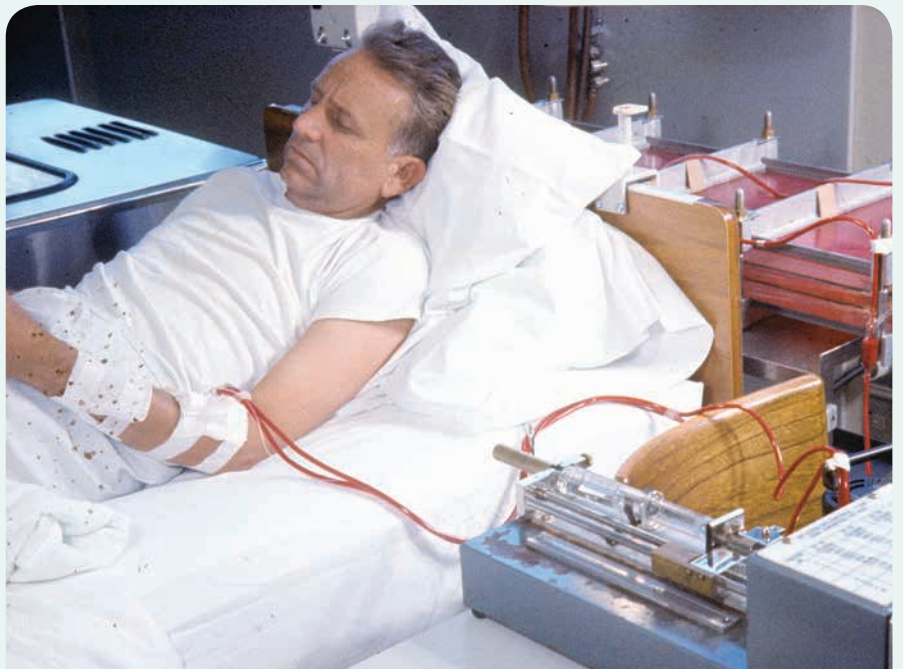
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## Northwest Kidney Center celebrates its 55th anniversary

Jan. 8, 2017 marks 55 years of dialysis at Northwest Kidney Centers. Known when we opened as the Seattle Artificial Kidney Center, ours was the world's first dialysis clinic outside a hospital.

Today, hundreds of thousands of people around the globe rely on the lifesaving treatment and procedures pioneered here. Locally, Northwest Kidney Centers remains the provider of choice for residents in King and Clallam counties.

We'll showcase people and stories from the past five and a half decades in a new collection of oral histories from our archives. Look for the videos on our website and in Facebook and Twitter posts this new year.



Industrial engineer Frank Smith became the Seattle Artificial Kidney Center's third patient in late January 1962.