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Nebraska Kidney Failure Patient Goes Above and Beyond the Call of Duty to Educate His Community – Awarded National DPC Hero Award

Award given to local patient in recognition of his leadership and advocacy in Lincoln as well as Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C. (July 30, 2007) – DaVita Patient Citizens (DPC) – a nationwide patient advocacy group comprised of more than 20,000 dialysis and pre-dialysis patients and family members – is proud to honor kidney dialysis patient Melvin Grayer as the June 2007 DPC Hero Award recipient. The DPC Hero award is a national recognition of empowered and heroic individuals who make a difference in the lives of dialysis patients and their communities. Grayer has been on dialysis for five years.

Last September, Grayer traveled to Washington, D.C. to ask Members of Congress for their support of legislation entitled, “Kidney Care Quality and Improvement Act.” A bi-partisan piece of legislation, this bill would have established patient education and disease management programs to inform patients about how to identify and manage kidney disease and how to prevent kidney failure. Grayer feels very strongly that with the rise of chronic diseases such as high blood pressure and diabetes in today’s society that educational and awareness initiatives are imperative.

Grayer also is an active participant in grassroots advocacy on behalf of the kidney disease community. In his local shopping mall, the Westfield Gateway in Lincoln, he set up a booth and handed out leaflets, brochures and candy to educate people about the signs and causes of kidney disease during National Kidney Month. Grayer has also worked to secure visits by local and national politicians to his local dialysis facility – helping educate them about dialysis and the daily struggles of dialysis patients.

“On behalf of the kidney community, we are honored to recognize Melvin as a DPC Hero,” said Patricia Orna, DPC President. “We are inspired by Melvin’s continued support and work, and thank him for his service to the kidney community. It is because of his work that many Lincoln residents are now educated on the many chronic diseases that could lead to kidney failure.”

More than 20 million people are at risk for Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). According to the National Kidney Foundation, 1 in 9 Americans suffers from CKD, commonly the result of hypertension or diabetes, which left untreated can progress to kidney failure – or End Stage Renal Disease. More than 400,000 Americans with ESRD must rely on quality dialysis services, or receive a transplant, to live.

“I am very committed to educating Americans about the importance of kidney health,” said Grayer. “It is exciting to be part of a group like DPC where there are thousands of people just like you – people hoping to make a difference in the lives of millions who may not even know they have chronic kidney disease. It is important that we educate all friends and neighbors as well as Members of Congress on the importance of education and awareness.”

Kidneys perform multiple essential functions. When the kidneys fail to function adequately, a replacement therapy must be chosen to sustain life. With appropriate intervention, patients with complete failure of their kidneys can live full, productive lives.

The DPC Hero program has been created to spotlight individuals who have gone above and beyond to positively impact kidney care in their community. The DPC Hero Award is open to caregivers, nephrologists, family members, patients, and other members of the kidney community who have empowered themselves or others in the kidney community.

Nominations for the DPC Hero award can be sent to dpc@dialysispatients.org or contact 1-866-877-4242.

Additional information on DaVita Patient Citizens can be found at www.dialysispatients.org.

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