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Contact: Charlie Adams, 703-548-0019

## **Michigan Kidney Patient Goes Above and Beyond to Help His Community—Awarded National DPC Hero Award**

*Award Given to Local Lansing Patient to Recognize His Leadership in the Kidney Community*

**Washington D.C. (February 11, 2008)** - DaVita Patient Citizens (DPC) – a nationwide patient advocacy group comprised of more than 22,000 dialysis and pre-dialysis patients and family members – is proud to honor dialysis patient Erich Ditschman as its February 2008 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.

“We are honored to recognize Erich as a DPC Hero for his impressive leadership in educating others about kidney disease and raising much-needed funds for the Michigan kidney community,” said DPC President Patricia Orna. “The DPC Hero award program strives to reflect the spirit of the thousands of people whose efforts make a difference in the lives of others, whose stories too often go untold. We are inspired by Erich’s continued support and hard work, and we thank him for his service to the kidney community.”

First diagnosed with End Stage Renal Disease (otherwise known as kidney failure) in 2000, Ditschman has led the fight in raising awareness about kidney disease, both in Michigan and nationally. Having suffered through numerous failed transplants and medical procedures, he now is able to dialyze at home and has become an active DPC Ambassador – having met with Congressional leaders and staff in Washington, D.C. to discuss the importance of providing necessary education and resources for dialysis patients. He has also organized and led a team for the past six years at the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan’s annual Mid-Michigan Walk. Ditschman’s team, “The River Dudes,” has raised over \$42,000 to-date to benefit kidney disease. A husband, father of two, and avid outdoorsman, Ditschman has been a source of inspiration in his community and an esteemed leader in raising awareness at the local and national levels.

“I am committed to helping people find resiliency, search out their dreams and continue to live wonderful lives even though they have to dialyze,” said Erich Ditschman. “DPC has helped me to reach out and spread the message that dialysis is just something we do, and it isn’t our life.”

Ditschman is also a very active participant in organizing and moderating Yahoo groups for home hemodialysis (HHD) patients. HHD is dialysis done at home during which the patient’s blood is cleaned the same way it is cleaned during in-center hemodialysis. This procedure allows the patient to dialyze more frequently and in the privacy of his/her home allowing him/her more time with family members and more control over his/her treatment schedules.

**[More About DPC Hero Award](#)**

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](mailto:dpc@dialysispatients.org) or you can contact 1-866-877-4242.

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