



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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California Dialysis Patients and Providers Visit State Capitol to Oppose Medi-Cal Cuts to Life-Saving Dialysis Services

– DaVita California Dialysis Day to raise awareness about growing health crisis affecting more than 41,000 Californians; Kidney disease incidence on the rise nationwide –

Sacramento, CA (February 20, 2008) – Members of California’s kidney care community, including DaVita caregivers, dialysis patients, and their family members, descended on the Capitol in Sacramento today, opposing cuts to the Medi-Cal benefit for dialysis treatment and asking policymakers to support policies that protect a growing number of patients with kidney failure. More than 41,000 Californians suffer from End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) and rely on lifesaving dialysis treatments to remove toxins from the blood in place of their failed kidneys.

DaVita California Dialysis Day was strengthened by the support of Assemblyman Roger Niello of California's Fifth District. “It is a sad fact that in our state we have over 41,000 residents who rely on dialysis services to survive, and that number only continues to grow,” said Assemblyman Niello. “Educating Californians about the warning signs of kidney disease is imperative to stopping the spread of this life-threatening illness and I applaud the patients and caregivers participating in Dialysis Day today.”

Kidney failure, which impacts approximately 26 million Americans nationwide, can be caused by diabetes and hypertension – the two leading risk factors. Minority populations, particularly Hispanics and African Americans, are disproportionately affected by kidney disease. In fact, Hispanic American populations are four to six times more likely to develop Chronic Kidney Disease than majority populations. African Americans make up 13 percent of the United States population but account for 37 percent of dialysis patients.



“Educating our legislators about the special needs of individuals with renal failure is essential so access to the quality care they deserve is not delayed. There are thousands of citizens at risk of developing kidney failure and we need help educating the public about the signs and symptoms to help them avoid this disease,” said Kris Podley, LCSW, BCD, Divisional Lead Social Worker at DaVita - Montclair Dialysis. Podley, a Dialysis Day participant who has worked with dialysis patients for 20 years, added, “California lawmakers must recognize the enormity of kidney failure throughout the state, and take action to fight it. We are calling on our state leaders to support adequate funding for the thousands of vulnerable patients we represent.”

The California Medi-Cal program’s outpatient dialysis reimbursement rate does not currently reimburse at the actual cost of delivering dialysis care. Patients and other concerned citizens from the renal community spent the day at the Capitol visiting legislators and encouraging them to stop further reductions to the Medi-Cal benefit, which could threaten patient access to quality dialysis services. In California, 85 percent of dialysis patients rely on government programs, including Medi-Cal and Medicare, to pay for their healthcare needs. Medi-Cal cuts to dialysis care could lead to the elimination of important patient programs, stalled quality improvements and facility closures.

A 2003 study by the National Institute of Health (NIH), “Hemodialysis Dose and Adequacy,” states that adequate dialysis, as measured by the reduction in urea as a result of dialysis (URR), and Kt/V, a measure of dialysis adequacy, generally allows patients to live longer and have fewer hospitalizations. As a consistent leader in the kidney care community in terms of patient outcomes, DaVita outpatient dialysis facilities, including 184 facilities across the state of California, save Medi-Cal dollars in funding each year by reducing hospital stays and maintaining patient health, therefore driving down overall medical expenditures.

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About DaVita Inc.

DaVita Inc., a FORTUNE 500® company, is a leading provider of kidney care in the United States, providing dialysis services and education for patients with chronic kidney failure and end stage renal disease. DaVita manages over 1,300 outpatient facilities and acute units in over 700 hospitals located in 43 states and the District of Columbia, serving more than 103,000 patients. For more information please visit www.davita.com

About DaVita Patient Citizens

DaVita Patient Citizens (DPC) is a nationwide patient advocacy group comprised of more than 22,000 dialysis and pre-dialysis patients and family members, working to improve the quality of life for all dialysis patients through education and advocacy.