



**KSLA-TV (CBS)**  
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### **Looming Health Crisis**

The growing number of kidney disease patients is alarming.

Even more troubling is the increasing amount of kidney failure patients who need dialysis to survive.

Reversing the troubling trend is a tough battle...one that congress is taking on.

This is where Katherine Stephenson spends four hours a day three days out of every week. Katherine Stephenson, Kidney Patient, "It's inconvenient but to keep me alive I have to come and get my treatment." Her treatment...dialysis to remove dangerous toxins from her blood that her damaged kidney can't get rid of. Katherine was diagnosed with kidney disease two years ago. Katherine, "They did the blood work and everything came back and my creatin was like at 5. I was going into renal failure."

Katherine is one of 80 patients who get dialyzed here at the North Shreveport Dialysis Center. Like other dialysis providers workers here are struggling to meet a growing need.

Gwen Blackbourne Austin, Clinical Manager, "Every day my phone rings with a new patient being put on dialysis. Do you have a spot? I have someone traveling. Do you have a spot and we just can't turn them down."

Most people agree it's a looming crisis in America...one that's being felt in the Ark-La-Tex. The number of people on dialysis is expected to quadruple in the next 25 years.

A Louisiana congressman is among more than 40 legislatures and many health care workers pushing a bill aimed at turning things around... by increasing funding for kidney disease and expanding patient education on how to prevent and treat it.

Dr. Michael Rokaw, Kidney Specialist, "People need to understand their kidney function the same way they understand their cholesterol and blood pressure. Everybody knows what their cholesterol is. Everybody knows blood pressure is bad for them but i think few people really know their kidney disease." And like Katherine they don't find out until it's too late.

Katherine, "I been difficult. I'm just starting to get adjusted to it. It takes a lot out of my life." Diabetes and then high blood pressure are the leading causes of kidney disease. And just because you urinate doesn't mean your kidneys are working right.

Click here for more information on kidney disease and the ["Kidney Care Quality and Improvement Act."](#)