

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Wall Street Journal
Letter to the Editor
November 18, 2005

As someone who was on dialysis for five years and as executive director of the largest dialysis patient organization in America, I would like to round out the perception of dialysis patients created by your article about Joe Mole. Certainly, there are dialysis patients like Mr. Mole. Indeed, I knew some of them, and I respected their decisions. But when I was on dialysis, I continued practicing law, did a triathlon and swam from Alcatraz to San Francisco -- twice. There are many others like me who do very well on dialysis and continue living productive, happy lives.

DaVita Patient Citizens is a nonprofit, dialysis patient-led organization with more than 10,000 members, almost all of whom are current dialysis patients. In my role as executive director, I have observed many patients who are thriving on dialysis and serving as leaders and patient advocates.

This year, groups of patient leaders from the organization went to Capitol Hill on two different occasions, meeting with 50 congressional offices. These leaders also educate fellow patients, invite members of Congress to tour their dialysis centers, participate in grass-roots letter campaigns and hold monthly calls to discuss how to improve the quality of dialysis patients' lives. DPC patients have advocated to the government for physician-driven medical decisions and adequate funding for dialysis treatments. If these efforts are successful, perhaps there will be more patients who can live productive lives on dialysis and fewer who have to make hard decisions like Joe Mole.

Janelle London

Menlo Park, Calif.