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**Kidney Community Gathers on Capitol Hill to Ask Congress to Support
Legislation for Increased Kidney Care Education, Updates for Kidney Dialysis Benefit**
*Minority Populations at Greatest Risk for Developing End Stage Renal Disease;
More than 26 Million Americans currently suffer from Kidney Disease*

WASHINGTON (April 7, 2008) -- Kidney Care Partners, a community-wide coalition of patient advocates, dialysis professionals, caregivers, providers and manufacturers committed to working together to improve quality of care for individuals with chronic kidney disease (CKD), today at an educational briefing on Capitol Hill asked Congress to pass legislation for improving kidney health through education and prevention programs as well as develop policies that allow for increased access to quality kidney care and thoughtful reform of the Medicare's End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) benefit. Kidney Care Partners also praised Senator Kent Conrad (D-ND) and Representative Albert Wynn (D-MD), both on hand at the briefing, for supporting the establishment of programs to inform patients of how to identify and manage kidney disease and how to prevent kidney failure.

In recognition of National Minority Health Month, KCP physicians, caregivers and patients addressed the alarming rate at which America's minority populations are being diagnosed with kidney disease and offered promising solutions to this mounting public health crisis. CKD impacts one in four Americans and is on the rise nationwide, especially among minority populations. In fact, minorities in the U.S. are two to four times more likely to reach kidney failure and need life-sustaining dialysis treatment than non-minority populations. According to the National Kidney Foundation, diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure for African and Hispanic Americans. Other common risk factors associated with kidney disease – obesity and high blood pressure – also disproportionately impact African and Hispanic Americans, therefore leading to CKD when not properly treated and maintained.

“Today, the incidence of kidney disease among minority populations is at an all time high and reaching levels that indicate a looming public health crisis for this community,” said Dr. Ed Jones, Chairman of Kidney Care Partners. “Kidney failure is a life-threatening illness that, in most cases, can be prevented through education and early detection. The Kidney Care Quality and Education Act is a positive first step toward slowing the progression of this leading health dilemma, but ultimately Congress must work with our community to find lasting solutions for reforming the current Medicare system to ensure quality kidney care for all Americans.”

The Kidney Care Quality and Education Act (S. 691 and H.R. 1193), introduced in Congress last year, would establish programs to educate patients about kidney disease risk factors, and teach them how to better manage their condition to help delay the onset of kidney failure. Such programs can help stem the rising tide of kidney disease in the United States, as well as ensure that kidney dialysis patients have continued access to quality care.

"The Kidney Care Quality and Education Act goes a long way to improve how we manage kidney disease. Educating patients to better manage their kidney disease makes good health sense and good financial sense," Senator Conrad said. "For people who do need dialysis, the Kidney Care Quality and Education Act ensures they will have access to the best quality care we can provide."

In addition to raising awareness about the dangers of kidney disease, the kidney care community is asking Congress to reform the Medicare ESRD benefit to reflect the needs of kidney disease patients and make quality healthcare available to all beneficiaries. Reforming the system includes providing an annual update for the Medicare ESRD program; allowing patients to have greater personal choice by extending Medicare as a Secondary Payer; and implementing a quality initiative program that would establish incentives that reward quality improvements.

"Every day, I see the life-altering consequences kidney failure has on an individual, their family and the community," said Nancy Scott, an ESRD patient, retired registered nurse and DaVita Patient Citizens member who spoke at today's event on Capitol Hill. "For the 400,000 Americans who depend on the Medicare ESRD benefit, living with kidney failure is made possible. As a former health care provider, community advocate and dialysis patient, I fully understand the importance of preserving and reforming this program. I hope our voices are heard throughout Congress today."

To learn more about the Kidney Care Quality and Education Act and how it would improve kidney care in the U.S., visit http://www.kidneycarepartners.com/kcp_act.html.

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About Kidney Care Partners

Kidney Care Partners is an alliance of patient advocates, dialysis professionals, providers and manufacturers working together to improve the quality of care for individuals with End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD).