

The Honorable Robert Orrock
Pocahontas Building, Room E309
900 East Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

February 23, 2022

RE: SB 241, Renal Disease Council and Renal Disease Council Fund (Hashmi) – SUPPORT

Chair Orrock and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of all the people we serve in Virginia, I am writing to request your support for SB 241, that would create the Renal Disease Council and Renal Disease Council Fund. This task force will study the reasons for the rising incidence of kidney disease in the state and ways to prevent it.

The American Kidney Fund (AKF) is the nation's leading nonprofit organizations working on behalf of the 37 million Americans living with kidney disease, and the millions more at risk, with an unmatched scope of programs that support people wherever they are in their fight against kidney disease, from prevention through transplant. With programs that address early detection, disease management, financial assistance, clinical research, innovation and advocacy, no kidney organization impacts more lives than AKF. We are also one of the nation's top-rated nonprofits, investing 97 cents of every donated dollar in programs, AKF has also received the highest [4-Star rating from Charity Navigator](#) for 19 consecutive years, as well as the Platinum Seal of Transparency from Guidestar.

Kidney disease is the fastest-growing non-contagious disease in the United States, with 14% of the population believed to have chronic kidney disease (CKD).^[1] There are no symptoms of CKD in the early stages, but if a person does not receive treatment, CKD will progress to End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD). The only treatment for ESRD is dialysis or transplant, both life-altering and high-cost options. However, if diagnosed in its early stages CKD can often be slowed or stopped with medication, lifestyle, and diet changes. That is why we are so supportive of all efforts, both public and private to educate, prevent, detect, diagnose, and treat this disease.

The pandemic has significantly exacerbated the rising rates of kidney disease. In fact, as many as half of the patients with COVID-19 that go into the ICU are now experiencing kidney failure.¹ As a result, the demand for kidney disease treatment, including dialysis will continue to rise even once the pandemic passes. According to Dr. Steven Coca, associate professor of nephrology at Mount Sinai Health System "The next epidemic will be chronic kidney disease in the U.S. among those who recovered from the coronavirus. Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, we have seen the highest rate of kidney failure in our lifetimes. It's a long-term health burden for patients, the medical community — and the U.S. economy."²

^[1] <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-statistics/kidney-disease>

¹ https://www.asn-online.org/covid-19/ASN#Kidney_Week

² <https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2020/new-data-shows-covid-19-can-cause-kidney-failure-and-launch-a-different-kind-of-epidemic/>

This task force will study the reasons for the rising incidence of kidney disease in the state and ways to prevent it. Even before the current pandemic, rates of kidney disease have been consistently rising across the country. But the current crisis has significantly increased the urgency to develop comprehensive solutions, specifically to address kidney disease.

For these reasons, we are hopeful for your support and stand ready to do whatever we can to help this legislation move forward.

Thank you again for your time and for your careful consideration of this important issue. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at any time.

Sincerely,



Lindsay Gill

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