Department of Health Gives Free Kidney Screenings for World Kidney Day

Harrisburg – The Pennsylvania Department of Health, along with the National Kidney Foundation and the Kidney Foundation of Central Pennsylvania, gave free kidney screenings today in Harrisburg.

A total of nine organizations participated in the event, arranged for World Kidney Day. Visitors to the event were given information and educational materials, free blood pressure screenings and kidney health risk assessments. In addition, a pharmacist was available to provide prescription medication reviews.

The event included a proclamation from Governor Tom Corbett declaring March 14 as Pennsylvania's Kidney Awareness Day, read by Acting Secretary of Health Michael Wolf.

"We can't stress enough the importance of knowing your numbers and knowing if you are at risk," Wolf said. "Early detection is critical for Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) and can help prevent the progression of kidney disease to kidney failure."

Nearly 26 million Americans have CKD, and most individuals do not know they are affected. This is because the majority of individuals with early stages of CKD go undiagnosed since there are few or no symptoms. In Pennsylvania, more than 15,000 residents are receiving dialysis and more than 6,500 residents are on the waiting list for a kidney transplant.

Certain ethnic groups, including African Americans, Asians, Hispanics and Native Americans are at higher risk of having CKD than the general population. The two leading causes of CKD are diabetes and high blood pressure. Additionally, there is a high risk group associated with kidney disease, namely:
- Patients with diabetes and hypertension;
- Individuals who are obese or smoke;
- Individuals over 50 years of age; and
- Individuals with a family history of kidney disease, diabetes mellitus or hypertension.

The Department of Health assists eligible individuals with the following costs related to their end-stage renal disease: dialysis services; renal transplantation; medical management; inpatient and outpatient services; home dialysis supplies and equipment; medications; and limited patient transportation.

Founded in 2006 by the International Society of Nephrology and the International Federation of Kidney Foundations, the mission of World Kidney Day is to raise awareness of the importance of the kidneys to overall health and to reduce the frequency and impact of kidney disease and its associated health problems. For more information, visit www.worldkidneyday.org.

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Editor's Note: The following is a copy of Governor Corbett's proclamation:

KIDNEY AWARENESS DAY
March 14, 2013

WHEREAS, 26 million American adults have chronic kidney disease and millions of others are at increased risk; and

WHEREAS, more than 15,812 Pennsylvanians are receiving dialysis; and

WHEREAS, 6,588 Pennsylvanians are on the waiting list for kidney transplants; and

WHEREAS, chronic kidney disease high risk groups include those with diabetes, hypertension and family history of kidney disease; and

WHEREAS, African-Americans, Hispanics, Pacific Islanders, Native Americans and seniors are at increased risk of developing chronic kidney disease; and

WHEREAS, early detection and treatment can often keep chronic kidney disease from getting worse, and can prevent the need for dialysis or a transplant; and

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Department of Health is committed to providing education and awareness on the causes of kidney disease; and

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Renal Disease Advisory Committee are committed to enhancing the lives of those living with chronic kidney disease by providing medical, pharmacy and transportation services.

THEREFORE, I, Tom Corbett, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, do hereby proclaim March 14, 2013 as KIDNEY AWARENESS DAY in Pennsylvania. I encourage all Pennsylvanians to recognize the value and importance of chronic kidney disease prevention and awareness.

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