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**PRESS CONTACT**

Douglas R. Marsh  
Executive Director  
Southern California Renal Disease Council Inc.  
6255 Sunset Blvd., Ste. 2211  
Los Angeles, CA 90028  
323-962-2020  
dmarsh@nw18.esrd.net

## **Kidney411.org Goes Live**

### **Southern California Website to Serve Region's Kidney Community**

LOS ANGELES...In a region as large as Southern California, it's often difficult to know where to turn when questions about healthcare arise. It's not that there are too few resources, but that often there are too many.

For people with or at risk of developing kidney disease, finding answers just became a lot easier. In June, a coalition of Southern California kidney-related organizations banded together to launch a new website, [www.kidney411.org](http://www.kidney411.org). The site serves as a portal into the far-flung world of kidney disease—from prevention to selecting a treatment option when your kidneys no longer work.

Having a centralized source of information is particularly important in Southern California because of the high number of kidney patients who reside here—more than 36,000 at last estimate—and because of the region's ethnic diversity, which translates into an even higher number of people at risk of developing kidney disease.

Hispanics, Asians, Pacific Islanders, and African Americans are disproportionately prone to developing kidney disease because of their higher rates of diabetes or high blood pressure, the

main causes of kidney failure. However, kidney disease does not discriminate: It affects men, women, and children of all races and from all walks of life. Many of the estimated 20 million Americans currently in the early stages of kidney disease will remain unaware of that fact until they are diagnosed with kidney failure, even though steps can be taken to stem progression of the disease if it is identified early.

Enter [kidney411.org](http://kidney411.org), a brainchild of the recently established Kidney Community of Southern California.

Recognizing the need to reach those Southern Californians at high risk of developing kidney disease, as well as the importance of improving the lives of those already on kidney dialysis or with a kidney transplant, a coalition of organizations that serve the needs of kidney patients was formed. Christened the Kidney Community of Southern California, the coalition is spearheaded by the Los Angeles-based Southern California Renal Disease Council (SCRDC).

SCRDC is one of 18 nonprofit organizations throughout the country responsible for administering Medicare's End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Program, providing coverage for people with kidney failure no matter what their age. Approximately 500,000 Americans have ESRD, nearly three-quarters of whom are on dialysis; the rest have received a transplant.

Under federal contract, SCRDC—also known as ESRD Network 18—oversees administration of the ESRD Program in 13 counties stretching from the Mexican and Arizona/Nevada borders to the central California coastal area and inland.

SCRDC also holds the distinction of being the country's Network Coordinating Center, facilitating special programs and initiatives undertaken by the nation's other 17 ESRD networks.

Network 18 set the stage for [kidney411.org](http://kidney411.org) by rolling out a blueprint, in May 2005, for its own special program: Building a Renal Coalition in Southern California Focused on Patient Centeredness (renal being another name for kidney). The coalition's goal is to provide greater coordination and effectiveness of kidney-related educational resources in Southern California and increase the strength of the patient-consumer voice.

[kidney411.org](http://kidney411.org) taps into the individual and collective strengths of the coalition members, consisting at present of nearly two dozen Southern California organizations that serve the needs of renal patients or healthcare professionals.

Among its many services, [kidney411.org](http://kidney411.org) provides links to local educational events for kidney patients (whether pre-dialysis, on dialysis, or with a kidney transplant), family members, and

healthcare professionals. People at risk of developing kidney disease can learn how to slow its advance. Information on giving “the gift of life” by becoming an organ donor is also provided.

Rounding out the site are links to federal, state, and community resources, including disaster preparedness advice for people who rely on dialysis for their survival. To better serve the diverse Southern California population, many of the materials found on kidney411.org are in Spanish, and translation into other languages is in the works.

Information on the 280 dialysis facilities and 18 transplant centers in Southern California can also be accessed from the site, as can information on the current member organizations of the Kidney Community of Southern California:

- American Association of Kidney Patients (local chapters)
- American Diabetes Association
- American Kidney Fund
- American Nephrology Nurses’ Association (local chapters)
- California Dialysis Council
- Council of Nephrology Social Workers (local chapters)
- Council on Renal Nutrition
- DaVita Healthcare
- Fresenius Medical Care
- Innovative Dialysis Systems, Inc.
- Kaiser Permanente
- Lumetra
- National Association of Nephrology Technicians/Technologists
- National Institute of Transplantation
- National Kidney Foundation of Southern California
- One Legacy
- Polycystic Kidney Disease Foundation (LA chapter)
- Renal Support Network
- Southern California Renal Disease Council, Inc.
- Transplant Recipients International Organization (Ventura County West Valley chapter)

For more information on the Kidney Community of Southern California, please visit [www.kidney411.org](http://www.kidney411.org), or contact ESRD Network 18 at (323) 962-2020; [www.esrdnetwork18.org](http://www.esrdnetwork18.org).

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