

# MAKING THE GREATEST IMPACT TOGETHER



Kidney Walk



## 2024 IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS



Living Donor Circle of Excellence



Chief Michael Recalma, Josie Osborne, MLA, Sharon Recalma



Kidney Gala

kidney  
FOUNDATION

# Helping Those Affected By Kidney Disease **LIVE** Their Best **LIFE**



Susan working in her garden

## When Susan was first diagnosed with kidney disease it was a complete shock.

“I had suffered with high blood pressure for 20 years but when I moved to BC from Ontario seven years ago, my blood pressure went through the roof.”

Knowing something was not quite right, Susan made an appointment at a local medical clinic and after a series of tests, was told she had stage four kidney disease. “I could not believe it. I knew very little about the disease and that high blood pressure is a key risk factor.” Susan is not alone on that front.

**A recent Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of The Kidney Foundation of Canada shows there is a significant gap in Canadians’ knowledge when it comes to kidneys, with 55% of people indicating they know nothing about kidney disease, and 52% lacking awareness of the risks.**

“After the shock of my diagnosis, I felt alone. It was then I discovered the Kidney Foundation and reached out to the BC & Yukon Branch to learn about the various programs and services, in addition to educational and volunteer opportunities.” Susan joined one of the volunteer chapters where she found others living with kidney disease in her community. “It was hugely therapeutic to speak to others going through similar experiences. I also attended some great educational sessions.” As time went by, Susan wanted to do more and knew that volunteering could be an invaluable way to not only give back but also share her experience with others, so

she decided to become a peer mentor.

The Kidney Foundation offers programs that provide peer mentorship support, guidance, and companionship to those grappling with the realities of kidney disease. Mentors are supported with a comprehensive training program that can also offer the chance to reflect and understand more about themselves. “I was matched with three lovely individuals, each with their own story. While I found it very rewarding to share my journey, it was also beneficial for me as I learned from the mentees. It’s a wonderful program.”

Today, Susan continues to work with her nephrologist and kidney care team to maintain her kidney function and do what she can to avoid dialysis. “My nephrologist wants me to adopt healthier lifestyle habits by walking and exercising more, as this is so important. I’m not much of a walker—never have been—but I was really pleased when I learned about the Kidney Wellness Hub.”

**Research shows that movement and healthy lifestyle habits are important for kidney health, and in the early stages of kidney disease may even help slow the progression to delay or eliminate the need for dialysis or a transplant.**

To help support healthy lifestyle habits and overall wellbeing, the Kidney Wellness Hub offers online tools, videos, and classes for staying active, eating well, mental wellbeing and socially connecting. An avid cook, Susan was concerned with how kidney disease would impact what

she could eat. But the Foundation’s kidney-friendly recipes and cooking classes led by renal dietitians put her at ease. She also participates in chair yoga for those with low mobility and Exercise Snacks—an initiative led by kinesiology students that involves a bit-size approach to exercise to build strength and mobility. Patients are offered individual check-ins to help them reach their goals.

For more than 60 years, the Kidney Foundation has served thousands of people affected by kidney disease in our communities, from patients, to care partners and living donors. The Foundation has many other programs to help bridge the gaps for patients and help remove financial barriers to treatment. The Short-Term Financial Assistance program offers emergency financial assistance to those facing hardship with expenses related to kidney disease and its treatment.

The Foundation also supports patients who live outside the Lower Mainland and must stay in Vancouver while they recover from transplant surgery by offering accommodation through the Kidney Suites program. This can be critical for those who cannot afford two months in a hotel or an apartment in Vancouver.

**“I just want to normalize my life as much as possible and I am very grateful for the Kidney Foundation and how it supports me and so many others in the kidney community to do just that,” Susan adds.**

But the work of the Kidney Foundation is far from over. Kidney disease is a serious disease; it is on the rise and becoming a burgeoning health challenge. It has no cure, and the only treatments are dialysis or a transplant. The Foundation and its supporters are working hard to confront these issues head on. ■

Data and survey results have shown that those who use kidney programs and resources discover:



# PATIENT IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

**KIDNEY PATIENTS ACCESSED 37,000 GRANTS, PROGRAMS, MATERIALS, AND RESOURCES TO IMPROVE THEIR KIDNEY HEALTH.**

## Financial Support

**839** Kidney Suites  
Home Dialysis Travel Coverage  
Dental Grants  
Short-Term Financial Assistance  
LODERP<sup>1</sup>

## One-on-One Support

**473**  
Kidney Info Hotline  
Kidney Camp  
Peer Support and Engagement  
Coaching

## Classes and Training

**12,307** Class Registrants  
On-Demand Class Users

## Health Tools

**12,638**  
BP Monitors  
Wellness Journals  
Kidney Wellness Hub Visitors

## Educational Materials

**11,169** Brochures  
Kidney Disease Manuals  
Kidney Magazine

<sup>1</sup>Living Organ Donor Expense Reimbursement Program

In 2023, kidney disease was the eleventh leading cause of death in Canada. By 2040 it is projected to become the fifth leading cause of life lost\*, highlighting the urgent need for prevention and control strategies.

\* World Kidney Day Statistics

## PATH TO IMPROVED KIDNEY HEALTH

### REMOVING FINANCIAL BARRIERS

- Bridge gaps for patients by improving equitable access to kidney health treatment
- Financial assistance covering emergency expenses related to kidney disease
- Grants for patients needing to travel to access dialysis training
- Low- or no-cost accommodation to support those recovering post-transplant surgery

### INCREASING AWARENESS, ADVOCACY, AND EDUCATION

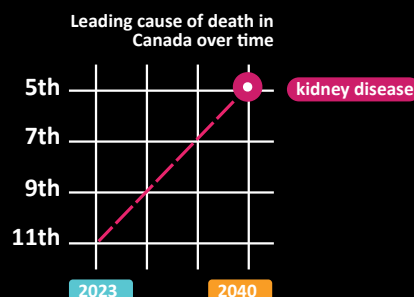
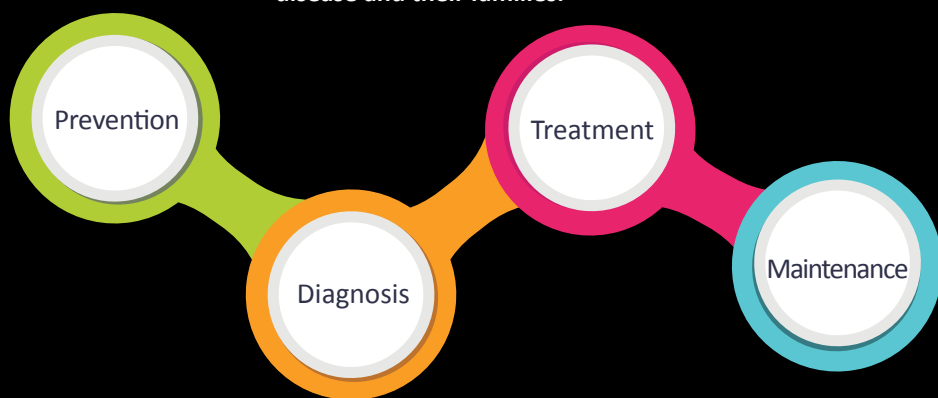
- Awareness campaigns with partner BC Renal to increase public understanding of risk factors and the importance of prevention
- Twice-monthly TV show, Kidney PLUGGED IN, airing on Rogers West TV in communities across BC and Canada, and on YouTube with more than 70,000 views
- Advocacy efforts to remove barriers to living donation and targeted outreach to Indigenous communities to connect with under-served and vulnerable populations
- Patient services team supporting those affected by kidney disease through resources and webinars

### SUPPORTING COMMUNITY, CONNECTIONS, AND WELLBEING

- Address stress and loneliness through peer support, engagement opportunities, and kidney kids camp
- Resources and online classes led by experts to help those living with kidney disease stay active, eat well, and boost mental wellbeing
- Provide volunteers with training and opportunities to connect through peer mentoring, lead walking meetups, and other initiatives in support of kidney patients



One in 10 Canadians have kidney disease, but in many cases progression can be slowed with early diagnosis and treatment, healthy lifestyle choices, and medications. The Kidney Foundation is working to improve outcomes through all stages and increase quality of life for those with kidney disease and their families.



# DONOR IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

Donors transform compassion into real, tangible impact.

Contribution to National Research, Programs, and Support Services

27%

Patient Services Including Organ Donation

42%

Where your dollars go

Management and Administration

6%

Public Education

15%

Volunteer Development

10%

Our donors play a vital role in the Foundation's mission by providing the financial support and resources needed to sustain programs, expand outreach, and create lasting positive change in the community. In 2024, donors fueled leading-edge research, critical programs and services, and resource development to support the quality of life of those affected by kidney disease and their families.

## Research Saves Lives



Kidney health research has led to improved prevention, early detection, and treatment strategies for kidney disease, ultimately enhancing patient outcomes and quality of life. Donor and grant dollars have significantly contributed to these life-changing improvements.

## Initiatives Save Lives



Donors have supported programs and initiatives that help remove financial barriers and provide equitable access to care and treatment for patients, while also reducing financial barriers to living donation. Grants have provided access to customized health and wellness classes and resources to help patients maintain good kidney health. This includes opportunities for peer connection, which support a patient's physical, mental, and social wellbeing.

# COMMUNITY IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

Communities turn our mission into action.



In 2024, the BC & Yukon Branch engaged in meetings with Indigenous leaders and health stakeholders in Northern BC to better understand the challenges faced by remote populations and those at highest risk for kidney disease. Discussions focussed on how to improve accessibility and awareness of its resources. The Branch hosted a Community Conversation in Whitehorse and met with members of the kidney community, creating an opportunity to share information and hear first-hand what life is like living with kidney disease, and how services can be customized for the Yukon.

## VOLUNTEERS

As a volunteer-driven organization, we could not do what we do if it were not for our hundreds and hundreds of volunteers. They help us raise funds, increase kidney health and organ donation awareness, support events, and act as mentors to patients.

### AWARENESS



Government Outreach  
Kidney Health Month Initiatives

### EVENT SUPPORT



Kidney Gala  
Tee Up 4 Transplant

### FUNDRAISING



Kidney Walk  
Local Fundraisers

### COMMUNITY BUILDING



Engagement Groups  
Peer Mentors  
Community Walk Leads

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