

For Immediate Release

PEPP SPEAKERS ADDRESS NEEDS OF PATIENTS AND HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

This year's speaker training program culls patients from throughout the US

Glendale, CA—Addressing the shortage of healthcare professionals and the growing number of kidney patients, the Renal Support Network (RSN) offers its innovative PEPP speakers program. PEPP (Patients Educating Patients and Professionals) is a series of educational presentations led by patient speakers. Designed to promote improved care and outcomes, the presentations are structured to increase the knowledgebase of both kidney patients and medical professionals. Some participants are also kidney transplant recipients who are well-informed about organ donation, of particular interest in April which is National Donate Life Month.

Speaker training sessions are scheduled from April 9 through 12 in El Segundo, California. The sessions attract patients from all over the United States who want to learn how to share their own inspiring stories of challenges and successes as well as specific information on a variety of topics.

In the coming training, these participants, who are carefully selected and screened for their basic ability to tell a story, will learn to enhance their public speaking skills in order to convey important information and experience. They will be coached by expert trainers from the medical and public speaking professions including Jack Barnard, Michael Josbena, Lori Hartwell, and Gail Wick.

“The PEPP speaker program is at the heart of my vision of patients helping other patients,” states Lori Hartwell, founder and President of the Renal Support Network. “As our professionally trained speakers address groups of patients and healthcare professionals, they inspire others to be knowledgeable and active in spreading information and inspiration. It has a tremendous halo effect as empowerment and hope spread across the kidney community,” she adds.

In 2007, 30 RSN patient speakers engaged over 5,600 patients, family members, and medical professionals in discussions about chronic kidney disease, and RSN projects that the number of patients and professionals reached will increase by 20% in 2008.

This year RSN has developed three important new programs that will draw on the experience of patients who have lived for more than a decade with CKD.

Kidney Survivor: Tips to help your patients thrive--Surviving chronic kidney disease requires a team effort. Healthcare professionals will learn the history of dialysis and patient survival, as well as ways to support and encourage patients who want to be more involved in their own care with successful long-term results. As survivors, patients motivate and encourage fellow patients through their own long-term survival techniques.

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Kidney Survivor: Lessons learned from experience shows that surviving chronic kidney disease requires knowledge and hope. In this presentation, patients and family members will learn the history of dialysis, patient survival information on DOPPS (Dialysis Outcomes and Practice Patterns Study), and the importance of optimism and engaging in one's own care. As survivors, patients motivate and encourage fellow patients through their own long term survival techniques.

In ***Make Yourself a Perfect 10*** patients will learn 10 tips for better living while on dialysis. Living long and well with CKD is dependent upon maintaining good outcomes. This presentation looks at ways patients can help improve their health and well being and be partner in their own care.

Other topics that address critical issues include:

Your Achy Breaky Heart: What you need to know about secondary hyperparathyroidism

A mix of medical facts and advice for the patient on how to help prevent or control secondary HPT, this topic is sprinkled with the patient-speaker's personal experiences. The audience will come away feeling empowered and hopeful despite the complexities of this condition--which are explained in uncommonly clear-cut terms.

Taking Charge and Adding Life to Your Years

Living long and well with CKD is dependent upon maintaining good outcomes. This presentation looks at what the Dialysis Outcomes and Practice Patterns Study (DOPPS) has revealed regarding nutrition, mineral metabolism, anemia management, vascular access, depression, and use of multivitamins and statins. This information will give patients the knowledge they need to take charge of their health.

Promoting Patient Participation in the Dialysis Setting

This presentation provides insight on how healthcare professionals can encourage patients to become actively involved in their treatment plan. It emphasizes strategies and suggestions that healthcare professionals can use to assist patients in reaching their full potential, interspersed with personal success stories of the patient-speaker.

Empowering Patients to be Their Own Advocate

Dealing with a chronic disease requires patients to acquire skills in self-advocacy. In this presentation, healthcare professionals will learn ways to support and encourage patients who want to be more involved in their own care. As these patients are motivated by their own successes, they will be a catalyst to inspire fellow patients.

The opportunity to have a PEPP speaker is so worthwhile, the patient perspective is of utmost importance and reminding all professionals of that is integral to a successful patient - healthcare provider relationship. I will definitely look to PEPP when planning future meetings."

Jennifer Kurzawa, RD

DaVita Divisional / Area Dietitian - Regions 2 & 3

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“The speaker did such a great job in presenting the material as well as connecting with his audience on such a personal level. The presentation was very informative. There were a number of patients struggling with problems, and I feel certain that they left feeling less alone and more hopeful for the future.”

Carole Mayer, MSW
Conference Chair of AAKP Palm Beach Chapter
American Association of Kidney Patients

“What a wonderful concept, “Empowering Patients to be their own Advocate” presented to our 25th Annual Educational Conference attendees. The evaluations reflected this both in grades and comments. Another PEPP presentation is a must for next year’s conference.”

Michael Paget
Executive Director
California Dialysis Council

For further information about the PEPP program and to book a PEPP speaker for patient or professional meetings, please call the Renal Support Network at (866) 903-1728, or visit RSN on the web at www.RSNhope.org.

ABOUT RSN:

Renal Support Network (RSN) offers informative, often entertaining patient-directed programs that bring health, happiness and hope into the lives of others affected by chronic kidney disease, whether in its early stages, on dialysis or after a kidney transplant. RSN programs include Renal Teen Prom (to be next held in Washington, D.C. on May 10, 2008), *Kidney Talk*, *Kidney Times*, KidneySpace, weKAN, HOPEline, PEPP Patient Speakers, Patient Meetings, *Live & Give Newsletter*, and much more. RSN is a non-profit, patient-run organization that strives to help others develop their personal coping skills, special talents and employability, by educating and empowering them, as well as their family members, to take control of the course and management of the disease. Visit www.RSNhope.org for more information.

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