Europe Called on to Take Action to Reduce the Growing Burden of Chronic Kidney Disease

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Affecting 10% of Europeans, the incidence of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is on the rise in pace with Europe’s aging population. There is an urgent need for improved public awareness, prevention strategies, early detection, education and subsequent management of CKD in clinical practice to deal with this growing and costly problem.

Today, in celebration World Kidney Day, the European Kidney Health Alliance together with the MEP Group for Kidney Health, are calling for a fundamental shift in policy and for much greater attention to primary and secondary prevention for CKD. In addition, they are calling for a European-wide effort to promote organ donation and transplantation programmes as a more cost-effective and sustainable solution with better outcomes than dialysis.

“The large number of people affected by CKD is of urgent concern because many will progress to end-stage kidney failure, which is a personal and economic tragedy for those affected and consumes disproportionate amounts of healthcare resources; but also because CKD even in its earliest stages greatly increases the risk of death from related cardiovascular disease,” said EKHA Chair, Professor Raymond Vanholder.

The silent epidemic is also a huge burden on national healthcare systems, with dialysis treatments alone accounting for 3% of national healthcare budgets. This figure is set to double in the next 5 years. Moreover, the costs involved with kidney disease are over four times what could be expected from the number of patients affected. The cost of implementing CKD prevention strategies, on the other hand, can be modest.

Despite the overwhelming burden of these conditions, awareness and prevention of these diseases remain relatively low. Early forms of CKD are often asymptomatic, making this ‘silent epidemic’ all the more critical to bring to light because early and effective interventions have been shown to diminish the risk of complications.

As a call to action to European policy-makers to implement tangible policies to combat this costly problem, the EU Kidney Forum will take place in Brussels on 30th March, hosted by MEP Ms Karin Kadenbach, new Chair of the MEP Group for Kidney Health. “Sustainable Kidney Care: Is it possible?” will be held with policy makers, patients, healthcare professionals and other key stakeholders to launch and discuss EKHA’s new Recommendations for Sustainable Kidney Care, for EU Member States to improve the primary and secondary prevention of CKD and optimise treatment. (To attend the dinner event, please email info@ekha.eu)
World Kidney Day is a unique opportunity to raise awareness at the public and highest political level for the prioritisation of Chronic Kidney Disease in public health, for the benefit of the growing number of people suffering, but also for our health systems and society in general.

The European Kidney Health Alliance (EKHA) is an Alliance of not-for-profit organisations representing all European stakeholders in kidney health issues including patients, nephrologists, researchers and health care workers in Europe. EKHA is Chaired by Nephrology Professor Emeritus Raymond Vanholder.

The MEP Group for Kidney Health works in collaboration with the European Kidney Health Alliance as a forum for important issues surrounding kidney health to be discussed at EU level. It brings together experts from the kidney community (physicians, patients, researchers, health economists, nurses and allied professionals) and European policymakers to discuss key topics and activities related to kidney health. In this way, MEPs receive valuable information relevant to their current work and are better able to hold the European Commission to account as it drafts new proposals that impinge of kidney health. The MEP Group meets once to twice yearly for concise and focused meetings. The group is chaired by Karin Kadenbach, MEP.

For more information

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