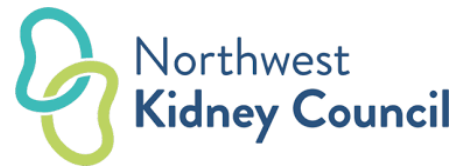


February 18th, 2021



Chair Prusak and Committee Members
House Committee on Health Care
RE: HB 2421

Dear Chair Prusak and committee members:

The NW Kidney Council (NWKC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting safety and access to quality care for the kidney community in Oregon and Washington. The Council was founded in 2019 as a coalition supporting the voices of patient advocates, health care professionals, care providers and researchers committed to shaping smart policy for individuals battling kidney disease in the Northwest.

I write today in support of HB 2421, which would establish the Oregon Kidney Disease Prevention and Education Task Force. Currently, chronic kidney disease (CKD) is the fastest growing non-contagious disease, with 14% of the population believed to have it¹. However, CKD can be hard to diagnose in the early stages as there are few, if any symptoms, making it more likely that patients will progress to end-stage renal disease (ESRD) or kidney failure. The task force created by this bill would develop a public information campaign focused on educating Oregonians about kidney disease and promoting preventative treatment.

Expanded patient education and awareness coupled with increased preventative treatment will help to slow the progression of CKD and empower patients overall to be more active in maintaining their health but we know that is not always enough. The risk of developing ESRD is higher for people of color. African Americans receive ESRD diagnoses at four times the rate of white Americans; Hispanics are almost 1.3 times more likely to be diagnosed with kidney failure; and Asians and Native Americans also have a higher prevalence of kidney disease². For these reasons, the NW Kidney Council strongly supports HB 2421's requirement that the awareness campaign promote health equity and include minority health organizations.

Patients who are diagnosed with kidney disease in its early stages can often slow or stop it from progressing with lifestyle and diet changes, as well as medications. A successful education and prevention campaign can help diminish the number of Oregonians diagnosed with ESRD, reducing the number of patients who require regular dialysis treatment or kidney transplants. Establishing this task force and bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders to tackle the issues surrounding kidney disease will lead to more informed dialogue, better decision-making and more robust policies that focus on improving patient outcomes and reducing health disparities.

We hope you join us in supporting this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ashley Clark".

Ashley Clark, Executive Director

¹ <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-statistics/kidney-disease>

² <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/kidney-disease/race-ethnicity>