DaVita Emphasizes Commitment to Whole-Person Care with Investment in National Kidney Foundation PEERS Program

The program aims to bring together a supportive network for people dealing with chronic health challenges for themselves and their loved ones

DENVER, Oct. 28, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- The DaVita Giving Foundation today announced an investment in the National Kidney Foundation (NKF)'s PEERS program, a program that provides social and emotional support for patients, care partners, and living donors through connections with mentors living through similar experiences.

Prioritizing mental health in chronic disease care is essential, and mentorship can help provide people with support and comfort in a time when they might otherwise feel alone. Studies[1] show that social connection can help reduce the risk of chronic disease and other serious illness, and lead to better mental and physical health.

"Receiving a chronic disease diagnosis can be a distressing and emotional experience for patients as well as their loved ones. Patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD) often manage multiple health conditions at once, and our dedicated care teams come together to support patients throughout their kidney care journey. While the support of care teams and partners is invaluable, nothing quite matches the comfort and understanding that comes from connecting with peers," remarked Dr. Jeff Giullian, chief medical officer for DaVita, a leading provider of kidney care services. "We celebrate the NKF PEERS program for its commitment to connecting patients with a broader health community, and we are truly grateful to be part of this vital effort."

Today, more than 356 individuals participate as mentors and mentees in the program, with 81% of participants managing a chronic illness like kidney failure.

"Going through a kidney disease diagnosis, being on dialysis, and getting evaluated for a transplant can be such a lonely process. NKF PEERS helps people in these moments make connections with someone else who's 'been there before,'" said Marissa Argentina, patient programs director for the NKF. "Connecting with trained peer mentors who have those lived experiences, can share their stories and are able to be a source of support for someone new to living with kidney disease, dialysis or transplant can make a huge difference."

Patients living with chronic disease are significantly more likely to experience depression and other mental health conditions[2], and studies[3] show that social connection improves the psychological well-being of those living with mental health conditions.

"When I first started dialysis, I felt depressed, so I asked my social worker at DaVita if there was a program where I could talk to someone experiencing the same things I was," said Felicia Tarnecki, DaVita patient and mentee participant in NKF PEERS. "My mentor answered my questions, and we talked on the phone often. It helped me feel less alone and more in control of my health."

The program connects participants telephonically and provides them with an opportunity to discuss their kidney care journey and ask questions in a comfortable environment with someone who has lived through similar experiences.

"I want to give others the encouragement through their journey that I wish I'd had, because I felt like nobody understood what I was going through," said Janine Prazza, mentor for the NKF PEERS program and a dual heart and kidney transplant recipient.

To learn more about DaVita's giving and community partnerships, visitDaVita.com/About. To learn more about support groups and other resources for those affected by kidney disease, visit DaVita.com/Support or Kidney.org/PEERS.

About DaVita Inc.
DaVita (NYSE: DVA) is a health care provider focused on transforming care delivery to improve quality of life for patients globally. As a comprehensive kidney care provider, DaVita has been a leader in clinical quality and innovation for more than 20 years. DaVita cares for patients at every stage and setting along their kidney health journey—from slowing the progression of kidney disease to helping to support transplantation, from acute hospital care to dialysis at home. As of June 30, 2024, DaVita served approximately 265,100 patients at 3,124 outpatient dialysis centers, of which 2,672 centers were located in the United States and 452 centers were located in 13 other countries worldwide. DaVita has reduced hospitalizations, improved mortality, and worked collaboratively to propel the kidney care industry to adopt an equitable and high-quality standard of care for all patients, everywhere. To learn more, visit DaVita.com/About.

Media Contact:
DaVita Newsroom
newsroom@davita.com

[1]Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2024, March 27). Social Connection. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved October 2, 2024, from https://www.cdc.gov/social-connectedness/about/index.html

[2]Based on 2021 data. John's Hopkins (2021, December 16). The Intersection of Mental Health and Chronic Disease. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2021/the-intersection-of-mental-health-and-chronic-disease

[3]Based on 2017 data. Harandi TF, Taghinasab MM, Nayeri TD. The correlation of social support with mental health: A meta-analysis. Electron Physician. 2017 Sep 25;9(9):5212-5222. doi: 10.19082/5212. PMID: 29038699; PMCID: PMC5633215.

SOURCE DaVita

---

https://davita.mediaroom.com/2024-10-28-DaVita-Emphasizes-Commitment-to-Whole-Person-Care-with-Investment-in-National-Kidney-Foundation-PEERS-Program