



## **PATIENTS AND CAREGIVERS TO PROTECT DIALYSIS PATIENTS**

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### **Dialysis patient advocacy groups join coalition of doctors, nurses, dialysis caregivers, and veterans to oppose the deeply-flawed dialysis proposition that puts vulnerable dialysis patients at severe risk**

**Coalition now more than 60 organizations (and growing).**

**SACRAMENTO** – Dialysis patient advocacy groups are lining up to oppose a deeply-flawed ballot measure that if passed, would put the lives of vulnerable dialysis patients at risk. Patient advocates are joining [Patients and Caregivers to Protect Dialysis Patients](#), a [coalition](#) of more than 60 groups representing doctors, nurses, patients, dialysis caregivers, veterans, and others to oppose this dangerous ballot measure.

“This ballot proposition puts the health and wellbeing of dialysis patients at risk, in what appears to be an aggressive effort to gain bargaining leverage for its union supporters,” said **Hrant Jamgochian, J.D., LL.M, Chief Executive Officer, Dialysis Patient Citizens**, a nationwide, non-profit, patient-led dialysis patient advocacy organization. “The unintended consequence of this effort is that patient care will suffer. We cannot afford to take such chances with the lives of some of our most vulnerable citizens.”

SEIU-United Healthcare Workers West union, (UHW), announced that on Thursday it planned to submit enough signatures to county registrars to qualify the proposition for the November 2018 statewide ballot.

“This initiative could force community dialysis clinics to cut services or close altogether,” said **Lori Hartwell, President and Founder, Renal Support Network**, a non-profit, kidney patient-focused, kidney patient-run organization that works to benefit individuals affected by chronic kidney disease. “People who need dialysis may be left without access to the life-saving treatment they need to stay alive. This is a dangerous proposition and should be defeated.”

“This initiative is an example of a special interest looking to exert political pressure at the patient’s expense,” said **Scott Bruun, executive director of the Chronic Disease Coalition**. The national nonprofit organization's members include hundreds of California residents living with

kidney failure, rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis, fibromyalgia and other chronic conditions frequently discriminated against by health insurers. "This harmful and misleading measure will limit patients' access to lifesaving dialysis treatment and endanger their lives."

The proposition sets new, artificially low limits on what insurance companies pay for dialysis care, jeopardizing clinics' ability to cover operating costs. If unable to cover their costs, clinics could be forced to cut back services, see fewer patients, or close down altogether, dangerously reducing access to care for Californians with kidney failure who need dialysis treatments three days a week, three to four hours at a time, to survive. Missing even one dialysis treatment increases the risk of patient mortality by 30 percent.

More specifically, under the proposition community dialysis clinics would be forced to issue annual rebates to private health insurance companies if any charge exceeds 115 percent of so-called "patient care services costs." And yet, nothing in the initiative requires insurance companies to pass even one dollar of these rebates on to consumers. Also, the proposition's definition of "patient care services costs" does not cover the actual cost of providing care at a clinic and excludes many necessary costs—including those important to patient care such as the physician medical director and the nurse clinical coordinator, among other positions and services excluded.

Non-profit and independent dialysis providers, rural providers and those serving a high volume of Medi-Cal patients are particularly susceptible to cutbacks or closures.

With the number of Californians needing dialysis increasing by about five percent per year and patients already have difficulty finding dialysis clinics close to home, this measure would have a disastrous effect on the more than 68,000 dialysis patients in California.

Further, the initiative is an abuse of California's ballot measure process as UHW is using it as part of a broader corporate campaign against the dialysis provider community. The union is seeking to organize dialysis workers and has so far been unsuccessful.

A [recent story in Politico](#) noted that since the 2012 election cycle, UHW has spent more than \$20 million on California ballot initiatives targeting clinics and hospitals where the union is either trying to organize new members or negotiate contracts. In 2018 alone, UHW has eight other ballot measures in California: an additional statewide initiative and seven local initiatives.

Care in California dialysis clinics consistently beats the national average. According to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, on average, California outperforms the rest of the nation on quality of care and patient satisfaction.

The coalition vowed to wage a comprehensive campaign to educate the voters in order to defeat this dangerous and deceptive measure.

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