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PATIENTS AND CAREGIVERS TO PROTECT DIALYSIS PATIENTS

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Coalition of emergency room doctors, physicians, nurses, patient advocacy groups and dialysis clinics vow to defeat Deeply-Flawed Dialysis Proposition now eligible for November ballot Dangerous measure puts the lives of vulnerable dialysis patients at risk.

SACRAMENTO – Today the California Secretary of State announced that backers of the Deeply-Flawed Dialysis Proposition had submitted enough signatures to be eligible for the November ballot. Unless proponents withdraw this measure by June 28, 2018, the measure will appear on the ballot this fall. In response, a coalition representing nearly 100 organizations, including the California Medical Association; American College of Emergency Physicians, California Chapter; American Nurses Association of California; California Dialysis Council and groups representing doctors, nurses, patients, veterans, community groups, health care providers and others vowed to fight on behalf of California patients to defeat this dangerous measure.

The proposition limits what health insurance companies pay for patient dialysis treatments by defining a narrow list of what clinics can bill to insurers as allowable costs. The artificially low reimbursement rate will not cover the actual cost of providing care at a clinic and could force many clinics to cut back services or even close. That will jeopardize access to care for dialysis patients who need treatment three days a week, four hours at a time, to survive.

*“For patients whose kidneys have failed, receiving dialysis is necessary to live. Missing even one appointment could be harmful or fatal. By limiting access to dialysis care, this dangerous proposition puts patients’ lives at risk,” said **Theodore M. Mazer, M.D., President of the California Medical Association.** “Excluding the physician medical director, who is required to oversee patient treatment in every dialysis clinic, is proof that this measure is seriously flawed and would hurt both access to care, as well as quality of care, for dialysis patients who are very ill. This proposition is dangerous and must be defeated.”*

“As emergency physicians, we regularly treat dialysis patients who end up in the ER due to missed dialysis appointments or complications from kidney failure. By reducing access to dialysis care, this proposition will leave this fragile population no choice but to go to the emergency room for treatment or increase their risk for life-threatening complications. It’s dangerous,” said **Dr. Aimee Moulin, President of the American College of Emergency Room Physicians – California Chapter.**

“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. 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,” said **Hrant Jamgochian, CEO of Dialysis Patient Citizens.**

“RPA fully supports all efforts to improve health outcomes in dialysis, but we are concerned that this initiative will negatively affect patients on dialysis in California. If dialysis clinics close or reduce the number of patients they are able to treat because of this initiative, patients would find it harder to access life-saving care,” said **Michael D. Shapiro, President of the Renal Physicians Association.**

“This initiative is an example of a special interest looking to exert political pressure at the patient’s expense. This harmful and misleading measure will limit patients’ access to lifesaving dialysis treatment and endanger their lives,” said **Scott Bruun, Executive Director of the Chronic Disease Coalition.**

With the number of Californians needing dialysis increasing by nearly five percent per year and some patients already having 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 United Healthcare Workers 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.

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.

Here is a list of the nearly 100 [groups opposed](#) to the dangerous measure.

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