

MEDIA RELEASE

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Kidney Health Australia welcomes Medicare Taskforce's recommendation for greater funding & support for young adults with chronic kidney disease

Kidney Health Australia welcomes a recommendation from the Medicare Benefits Review Taskforce, announced today, to look at ways to better coordinate support one of the most vulnerable demographics living with chronic kidney disease in Australia.

Kidney Health Australia's CEO, Mikaela Stafrace, is pleased the Taskforce has called for investigation from an inter-governmental body to resolve the issue of poor outcomes for young adults with chronic kidney disease.

She said the young adult demographic, which is 16 to 23 year olds, needed sustainable funding to support them through the difficult transition period from paediatric to adult clinical health settings, and to support them emotionally during their teenage and young adult years.

"We welcome the Taskforce committee's recognition of this gap in the health system and we look forward to working with all agencies to improve outcomes for this vulnerable group," Ms Stafrace said.

"Kidney Health Australia agrees there's a need for ongoing and sustainable funding for adolescents and young adults with complex kidney disease. Transplant recipients have to follow a strict regime of medications to prevent their new organs being rejected. Adolescents and young adult transplant recipients have been shown to be at particular risk of not fully adhering to their medication or even refuse to take it.

"A consequence of this is that kidney transplants fail in adolescent and young adults more than in any other age group up to 70 years of age.

"There are various support models in a number of states which are having a positive impact on young people," added Ms Stafrace, "Kidney Health Australia hopes to see this support grow, and looks forward to following the progress of this recommendation and the improved health outcomes for patients."

Kidney Health Australia, formerly the Australian Kidney Foundation, is a national health care charity with a vision 'to save and improve the lives of Australians affected by kidney disease'.

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For more information or to arrange an interview, contact:

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Note to Eds.

The rate of kidney transplant failure in young adults aged 18 to 25 years is the highest of any age group in Australia. Up to one third of transplanted kidneys fail to graft successfully. There are many reasons for this including the daunting nature of adult kidney care programs compared with those available in paediatric care and the sense of isolation teenagers entering adult programs can experience, with consequent reduced levels of participation.