



MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

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Sen. Kennedy Appointed to Chronic Kidney Disease Task Force

JEFFERSON CITY— Sen. Harry Kennedy (D-St. Louis) has been appointed to the Chronic Kidney Disease task Force by the President Pro Tem of the Missouri Senate. The creation of the task force is due to a provision in Senate Bill 577, which replaces the state medical assistance program (Medicaid) with Mo HealthNet.

The duties of the chronic kidney disease task force include developing a plan to educate the public and health care professionals about the advantages and methods of early screening, diagnosis, and treatment of chronic kidney disease. The task force will submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by August 30, 2008, at which time the task force shall expire.

“Medical researchers tell us that ten to twenty million Americans have chronic kidney disease and don’t know it,” Sen. Kennedy said. “We need to increase awareness if we are going to reduce the rate of progression and complications from kidney disease.”

The National Institutes of Health reports that over the past decade the number of people with kidney failure doubled, and the number starting dialysis or having a first kidney transplant increased by 50 percent. Currently, more than 400,000 Americans are being treated for kidney failure at a cost of \$25 billion annually.

People with chronic kidney disease are at high risk for premature death, heart attacks and strokes as well as hypertension, anemia, bone disease and malnutrition.

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The 17-member Chronic Kidney Disease Task Force is charged with:

- Developing a plan to educate the public and health care professionals about the advantages and methods of early screening, diagnosis and treatment of chronic kidney disease and its complications;
- Making recommendations on the implementation of a cost-effective plan for early screening, diagnosis and treatment of chronic kidney disease for the state's population;
- Identifying barriers to adoption of best practices and potential public policy options to address such barriers;
- Submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by August 30, 2008.

“The earlier kidney disease can be detected, the earlier it can be treated, and sometimes that makes all the difference,” Sen. Kennedy said.

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