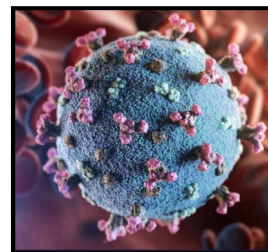


By: Vivian Jan Tarkul, MS, PharmD

The coronavirus pandemic arrived almost three years ago and killed millions worldwide. The first two coronavirus disease (COVID-19) deaths in the United States were chronic kidney disease (CKD) patients. Casualties continued to increase (amongst such patients) during the first several months of the pandemic. According to the Center of Disease Control and Prevention, 50% of dialysis patients who got Covid-19 were hospitalized, and 20-30% of hospitalized dialysis patients with Covid-19 died.

Dialysis patients and patients who received a kidney transplant also have a weaker immune system and are at higher risk of contracting COVID-19. Additionally, patients with no known underlying kidney disease started to show acute kidney injury when hospitalized with COVID-19. These reports supported the clinical findings that COVID-19 infection affected the kidneys and increased the deterioration of renal function faster in CKD patients.

No one currently knows why COVID-19 infection may be affecting individuals differently. Since 2019, researchers, doctors, and clinicians have scrambled to decipher the COVID-19 mechanism of action. Understanding these mechanisms would allow for treating future sub-variants with effective COVID-19 vaccines and oral therapies.



Proposed factors that may explain why COVID-19 affects CKD patients significantly more than other patients

with different pathologies:

1. COVID-19 viruses are highly expressed in ACE or DPP4 receptors of the renal tubules, where they can attach, multiply, invade and damage kidney tissues.
2. COVID-19 viruses could damage surrounding vasculature areas, and abnormally low oxygen levels are transported to the kidneys.

(Cont'd on p.2)

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## **The Bay Area Association of Kidney Patients**

is a volunteer non-profit 501(c)3 organization with the

### **Mission to Educate and Support Bay Area Kidney Patients**

Attend the Educational Presentations and Support Group Meetings,  
read the *Kidney Konnections* newsletter and visit our website at [www.baakp.org](http://www.baakp.org)



# **Kidney Konnections**

3. Covid-19 can cause small clots to form in the veins and small arteries to block the kidneys from performing their function.

4. Covid-19 not only causes kidneys to malfunction but can also produce inflammatory cytokine storms, which can destroy healthy kidneys.

5. Covid-19 infections attack CKD patients much more readily, especially those taking glucocorticoids and immunosuppressant medications.



Dr. Vivian Jan Turkel

The global pandemic strained our healthcare system to the point where we have seen chronic shortages of healthcare professionals in hospitals and community settings and backlogs in supply chains. As a result, this created tremendous stress and challenges for everyone. The continual care of CKD patients is critical, and fortunately, community pharmacists are the most accessible health care professionals.

During the onset of Covid-19, community pharmacists' role expanded beyond dispensing medications. Today they play a much more active role in patient care. As part of their responsibilities, pharmacists are highly trained to assist CKD patients by reviewing their list of medications, identifying potential drug-drug interactions, educating them on risk factors, and following up on therapeutic drug monitoring and pharmacotherapy. Community pharmacists also assist CKD patients in better understanding their medications, counseling, identifying potential side effects, and promoting medication adherence. Patients actively involved in their treatment remained healthy amidst the Covid-19 pandemic as they were better informed about controlling their disease.

Pharmacies have expanded their services to home delivery of medications, critical supplies, necessary protective items, and telehealth to pharmacists providing patient care services. Community pharmacists have also assisted in screening, point-of-care testing, dispensing Covid-19 test kits,

and administering Covid-19 vaccines to CKD patients. The benefits of the Covid-19 vaccine to CKD patients far outweigh the risk of contracting Covid-19. If they are concerned about their safety, CKD patients should talk with their physicians, pharmacists, or other healthcare professionals about the Covid-19 vaccines.

Although Covid-19 has been challenging for CKD patients, community pharmacists' service has helped manage CKD patients with medication usage, safety, and adherence. Pharmacists' involvement as one of the frontline healthcare professionals during Covid-19 has reshaped the pharmacists' role in managing CKD and emerging infectious diseases and health crises.

### References

Chronic Kidney Disease: Common- Serious- Costly cdc.gov. Reviewed: February 28, 2022. Accessed July 16, 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/kidneydisease/prevention-risk/CKD-common-serious-costly.html>

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Legrand, M. et al. Pathophysiology of COVID-19 associated acute kidney injury. Nature Reviews Nephrology. 2021; 17: 751-764.

Okoro, RN. COVID-19 pandemic: The role of community pharmacists in chronic kidney disease management supportive care. Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy. 2021; 17: 1925-1928.

### The Early Bird Gets the Worm!

#### Did you know...

**that you may sign up for a kidney transplant BEFORE you go on dialysis?** When your



Glomerular Filtration Rate (GFR) drops to 20 or below, you are eligible to get onto a transplant list. Dialysis often is not initiated until you are symptomatic (GFR 8-10 ml/min). A transplant (from either a living or deceased donor) before dialysis is called a **pre-emptive transplant**; you

should aim for that. To sign up for a kidney transplant, ask your Nephrologist to refer you to the transplant center of your choice. Remember each transplant center has its own set of guidelines. If you are rejected by Hospital A, try Hospital B or then C. **GOOD LUCK!**

## ***Annual Enrollment Review Your Medical Insurance: It's That Time of Year Again!***

Once a year, you are allowed to change your insurance selections. If you belong to Medicare, Annual Enrollment is when you can join or change your stand-alone Part D prescription drug plan or Medicare Advantage plan for the next year. Medicare and HICAP (Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program) strongly recommend reviewing your prescription drug plan or Medicare Advantage Plan every year. You could save money, get better coverage, or both.

New prescription drug and health plan choices are offered every year. Moreover, plans can change their list of covered drugs, provider networks, benefits, copays, and more. Your needs may have changed too. You may be treated for a new condition or take a new medication that a different plan may more optimally cover. According to a recent Forbes article, 90% of those surveyed were not in the most cost-effective Medicare plan for their prescriptions. Don't be caught off guard when you go to the pharmacy or doctor next year and find that your drug or service isn't covered or has a higher copay!

Medicare annual enrollment for coverage in 2023 starts on Tuesday, October 15, 2022, and ends on Saturday, December 7, 2022. You can enroll in Medi-Cal year-round.

Contact your local HICAP office for free help in evaluating your options. Go to <https://cahealthadvocates.org/hicap/> and select your county for specific web addresses and telephone numbers.

Suppose you are under 65 and have Covered California. In that case, you can apply for a health plan outside of open enrollment (or make changes to your current policy) if you experienced one of these qualifying events (usually within the first 60 days).

### **Qualifying life events are:**

- Lost job or income**
- Turned 26 years old or 65 years old**
- Married or entered a domestic partnership**
- Lost health insurance**



## ***Medical Advisors to the Bay Area Association of Kidney Patients***

### **Ole Dierks, M. D.**

Dr. Dierks practices in Oakland, CA with the West Coast Kidney Institute (formerly Chabot Nephrology Medical Group). He served as the chief of the nephrology section at Alta Bates Summit Medical Center and is the medical Director of the Fresenius (Peralta) hemodialysis unit in Oakland.

He offers the full spectrum of clinical nephrology and has expertise in the field of interventional nephrology.

See: <http://chabotnephrology.com/providers/ole-dierks-md/>



### **Mitra Sorooshian, M. D.**

Dr. Sorooshian practices Nephrology at the Palo Alto Medical Foundation in Mountain View, CA. She received her medical school education in England & did her internship and residency in New York. Afterwards, she completed a fellowship at Stanford. She practices at El Camino Hospital in Mountain View and consistently receives 5-star reviews from her patients. She is also the Medical Director at Satellite Dialysis in Sunnyvale.

See: <https://www.sutterhealth.org/find-doctor/dr-mitra-sorooshian>



**We thank Dr. Dierks and Dr. Sorooshian for their continued expertise and support!**





***The list of our members who received transplants is getting longer!  
Please see these "Kidney-versaries" with their transplant date***

The Bay Area Association of Kidney Patients recognizes our members who have worked hard for and received a kidney transplant. If you would like your name and your transplant date in a future newsletter, please let us know the date of your transplant. Call 650-323-2225 or email us at [info@baakp.org](mailto:info@baakp.org)

**How BAAKP can help you get on the transplant list:**

If you want a kidney transplant, you should know the steps to reach that goal. The medical centers that perform transplants are looking for recipients who understand their kidney disease and the responsibilities of having a transplant. Doctors also want their patient to be as healthy as possible and enthusiastic. (It is a competition among the medical centers working to keep their transplant survival numbers higher than those of other centers!)

To help educate yourself:

1. Attend our educational presentations;
2. Attend our support groups (they occur every month);
3. Reach into our website archives ([www.baakp.org](http://www.baakp.org)) and view what our expert speakers have had to say;
4. Check our past newsletters (also on our website);
5. More transplant information is found on our Facebook page & on Twitter and Instagram.
6. Most importantly, to increase your chance of being selected for a transplant, **BE INFORMED!**



**Could this be YOUR kidney?**

Mike	Alonso	11/30/2019
Ryan	Barr	4/23/2014
Wayne	Bennion	6/2/2017
James	Billbury	5/27/2016
Iris	Corina	6/9/2014
Alec	Costerus	12/14/2021
Rachel	Eaton	4/24/2018
Craig	Elliott	9/29/2018
Debra	Elmore	10/23/2014
Kevin	Fowler	8/12/2004
Joan	Grealis	11/14/2017
Maria	Grijalva	4/15/1987
Marina	Gudino	11/9/2010
James	Hoey	4/21/2010
Jon	Lee	11/30/2014
Pamela	Mery	3/6/2018
Greg	Mustard	2/27/2016
Robert	Neal	12/26/2016
Anna Mae	Olivares	1/2/2018
Denise	Ray	8/19/2020
Deanne	Rey	5/25/2015
Donna	Reynolds	11/8/2004
Diane	Sementelli	12/21/2017
Israel	Shualy	1/14/2019
Rebecca	Sidor	6/23/2020
Christine	Sleight	4/14/2016
Karen	Soo Hoo	2/11/2014
Janice	Starling	12/8/2013
Jerry	Strom	1/29/2015
Pearl	Su	2/12/2020
Supachai	Tarkul	4/9/2021
Linda	Umbach	2/27/2008
Marcus	Wong	4/15/2020
Phillip	Wyche	11/22/2013
Ellen	Yip	1/20/2014

## ***Meet Your Bay Area Association of Kidney Patients Board of Directors for 2022***



**(left to right) Walt Umbach, Linda Umbach, Toni Rodolfo-Benson, Phil Wyche, Rebecca Sidor, Bobby Neal, Debra Elmore, Marcus Wong**

We invite you to bring your energy and talents and apply to become a Board Member of the BAAKP. Contact Executive Director Debra Elmore for an application ([debra.elmore@baakp.org](mailto:debra.elmore@baakp.org)).

### ***Our 15th Anniversary and the Upcoming Annual Fundraising Campaign***

BAAKP is proud to announce our 15th Anniversary. Yes, it was 15 years ago that we held the first Educational Presentation at Sequoia Hospital in Redwood City. Since then, we have held 45 presentations and 127 monthly support groups. The Pandemic didn't stop us; we migrated to Zoom and have continued the Education and Support of Bay Area Kidney Patients.

Tuesday, November 29th is Giving Tuesday, which also kicks off our year-end fundraising campaign. This fundraising campaign will last through the end of the year, so don't panic if you miss Giving Tuesday. You can donate at [baakp.org/donate](https://baakp.org/donate) through PayPal. (You can save BAAKP the

2-1/2 % PayPal fee by mailing your donation directly to BAAKP at P.O. Box 2332, Menlo Park, CA 94025-2332.)

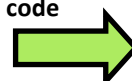


**This is a great time to help BAAKP, as we have a special member who will double your donation up to \$5000!**



**And... if you donate \$50 or more, your name will be entered into a raffle for 3 gift cards with the top prize of a \$300 gift card!**

Donate  
now using  
this QR  
code





## ***Lifesaving and Free but COVID Medication Goes Begging***

Yes, **Evusheld** is free to eligible patients! It is a medication that can prevent SARS-CoV-2, COVID infections in high-risk patients, but only 25% of the nationwide supply of 1.7 million doses have been used.

At least 7 million people are immunocompromised or immunosuppressed, including cancer patients and other patients who are allergic to COVID-19 vaccines.

The **Evusheld** medication consists of laboratory-produced monoclonal antibodies against COVID, reducing infection risk by 77%. Evusheld (AZD7442) is a combination of two long-



acting antibodies (tixagevimab and cilgavimab) is administered by intramuscular (IM) injection.

Dorry Segev, M.D., Ph.D., transplant surgeon at Johns Hopkins University, refers to a recent publication that states: "the transplant patient has 82 times higher risk of breakthrough-infection than people in the general population." Contact your Nephrologist or Transplant Nephrologist for more information. Also, see the website <https://www.extralayerofprotection.com/en/home/hcp.html>! Don't miss this opportunity!

**Hot off the press:** Local hospitals doubt the effectiveness of Evusheld against present variants. Contact your nephrologist or primary physician to see if you are eligible for this medication.

## ***Everybody Loves Walt* by Phil Wyche**

This year, the Bay Area Association of Kidney Patients (BAAKP) celebrates fifteen years of serving San Francisco Bay Area kidney patients. Over these past 15 years, the BAAKP has been very fortunate to have energetic, exciting people who developed BAAKP into what it is today.

Let me introduce to you Walt Umbach...

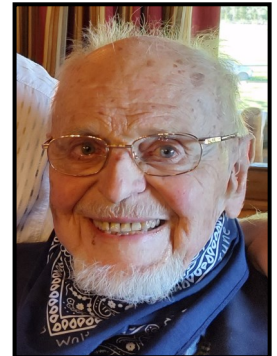
As we celebrate these past 15 years, the BAAKP wants to recognize Walt Umbach. As a founding father of the organization, Walt never had kidney disease but was a huge support person for his wife Linda. Walt was all in when Linda and others wanted to start a kidney support group sponsored by a PAMF nephrologist, Toby Gottheiner in 2007.

Walt used his business and military background, leadership, and financial skills to help build BAAKP. He has consistently served on the Board of Directors for the past 15 years and has held positions as President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer. At the beginning of our organization, Walt was still managing his own company which he had operated for many years.

He is also quite charismatic, a humble person who can always find the time to address any issues with a funny one-liner that could make anyone laugh. As in any organization, there is always

someone who can lead without being a leader and demonstrates patience, humor, dedication, and thoughtfulness.

As for all of us, there comes a time when we must allow ourselves time to change direction and reset our goals and priorities. Walt has chosen to remain on the board but is stepping back from our day-to-day operations. In 2021, Walt was able to participate in the Veterans Honor



Flight as a WWII veteran. The mission of the Honor Flights is to celebrate America's veterans by inviting them to share in a day of honor at our nation's memorials in Washington, DC. In June, he and Linda and their family went to a dude ranch in Montana. He just celebrated his 95th birthday and looks forward to spending more time with his wife, sons (4) and daughter, his 16 grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren!

Walt, from the Board Members past and present, we gratefully acknowledge all your hard work and dedication to BAAKP. Without your commitment, direction, guidance, and excellent performance, we would not be the organization we are today. We appreciate you, thank you and love you.

# The Holiday Season is Coming!

## At the Local Dialysis Center



(From The Lighter Side of Dialysis Vol 1 by Peter Quaipe)

## Festive Cranberry Stuffing

3 cups soft, stale bread crumbs  
1 cup peeled, diced, tart apples  
1/2 cup diced raw cranberries  
1/4 cup chopped celery  
1/4 teaspoon poultry seasoning  
1/4 cup apple juice  
2 tablespoons unsalted margarine, melted

Preheat oven to 350° F. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and toss to mix. Place in a lightly greased casserole dish. Bake for 30 minutes.

**Serves 10, 1/2 cup per serving**

Calories	150
Carbohydrates	25
Protein	4
Fat	4
Sodium	243
Potassium	79
Phosphorus	45

(From "Living Well on Dialysis" published by NKF)

## Upcoming Support Group Dates

Due to COVID-19, all BAAKP events (Education Presentations and Support Groups) are held online with Zoom until further notice. Support group meetings are usually the 2nd Sunday of the month

from 3:00 to 4:30 PM.

You can register online for a Support Group at

<http://www.baakp.org/support-groups> to attend a meeting.



### Zoom Support Group Meetings for 2022-2023

- November 13, 2022
- December 11, 2022
- January 8, 2023
- February 19, 2023
- March 12, 2023
- April 16, 2023
- May 21, 2023
- June 11, 2023
- July 9, 2023
- August 13, 2023
- September 10, 2023
- October 8, 2023
- November 5, 2023

Post Office Box 2332  
Menlo Park, CA 94026-2332

Phone: (650) 323-2225  
Email: [info@baakp.org](mailto:info@baakp.org)

**Educating & Supporting  
Kidney Patients!**

Please visit our website

[www.baakp.org](http://www.baakp.org)

...To read back issues of our news-  
letters, view videos of our past  
meetings, or to make a donation. Your  
support is greatly appreciated!



## ***Medicare and ESRD: What You Need to Know***

Mark your calendars for our next Educational Presentation/Webinar on **Sunday, February 5, 2023 from 1 to 2:30 pm (PST)**.

**Pam Brown** from **Contra Costa County HICAP** will be our speaker answering your questions about Medicare and ESRD (End Stage Renal Disease).

In this webinar, you will learn how Medicare and End Stage Renal Disease work together. If you have ESRD, you can get Medicare no matter what age you are if all of these apply:

- Your kidneys no longer work;
- You need regular dialysis or have had a kidney transplant; or
- One of these applies to you:
  - You've worked the required amount of time under Social Security, the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB), or as a government employee;

- You're already getting or are eligible for Social Security or Railroad Retirement benefits;
- You are the spouse or dependent child of a person who meets either of the requirements listed above.

**To register:**

<https://tinyurl.com/BAAKP-Feb2023>

You can also phone 650-323-2225.

