

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Kathryn Guccione
(202) 333-0825 ext. 240
kguccione@womeningovernment.org

Ellie Schlam
(800) 622-9010, ext. 143
ellies@kidney.org

**WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES FIRST-EVER POLICY RESOURCE
CENTER TO ADDRESS CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE**

*New Partnership with National Kidney Foundation
Will Provide Additional Educational Resources to State Policymakers*

Washington, DC, March 1, 2006 --- Women In Government, representing state-level women elected officials, today launched the first-ever policy resource center designed to help state lawmakers tackle the growing problem of chronic kidney disease (CKD) in the United States. The Chronic Kidney Disease Policy Resource Center will provide policymakers with comprehensive educational resources to help bring the problem of this disease to the legislative forefront in each state. A new partnership with the National Kidney Foundation will help enhance the functions of the Resource Center.

“States can play a significant role in creating awareness of chronic kidney disease and educating their citizens about the benefits of early detection for better patient outcomes,” said Susan Crosby, president of Women In Government. “However, to date, there has not been a centralized clearinghouse of information to help connect state legislators to data and other policy resources they need in order to advance this issue in their respective states. Our Chronic Kidney Disease Policy Resource Center is designed to change that.” Ms. Crosby noted that Women In Government has also established policy resource centers to support state lawmakers’ efforts to address cervical cancer prevention and access to higher education.

CKD affects 20 million people in the U.S., with another 20 million Americans at potentially increased risk. Americans with diabetes, hypertension or with a family history of diabetes, hypertension or kidney failure are at risk for CKD, as are people with heart disease. In addition, older Americans, African-Americans, American Indians, and Hispanic-Americans are CKD risk groups that deserve special attention.

The number of Americans with kidney failure who are either treated with dialysis or transplantation is expected to increase 85 percent between 2000 and 2015. Early detection is essential in preventing the progression of kidney disease to kidney failure, yet many Americans remain unaware of the disease and its risk factors.

<more>

CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE/2

“Between 1992 and 2002, the percentage of Medicare beneficiaries with a diagnosis of CKD increased from 3.1 to 6.8 percent. With such high prevalence, it is essential that policymakers are responsive to this public health issue and help win the battle against this relentless disease. Through legislative programs and policy initiatives, our state affiliates, in collaboration with Women In Government, can focus on increased awareness, early diagnosis, and treatment of chronic kidney disease. The National Kidney Foundation is excited to work with Women In Government to bring the issue of chronic kidney disease to the legislative agenda, while emphasizing education as the most effective measure in disease prevention and management,” said Dolph Chianchiano, senior vice president for Health Policy and Research at the National Kidney Foundation.

A recent study by the Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research found that chronic kidney disease is linked to a high risk of death from heart disease. The study also demonstrated that CKD doubles costs for a healthcare system, and comorbidities, such as diabetes and hypertension, related to CKD further increase the cost of disease management. With the rising cost of healthcare in our country, it is essential that individuals are educated about the importance of prevention and early detection in order to avoid the medical and financial complications of chronic kidney disease.

The Chronic Kidney Disease Policy Resource Center will support state legislative and outreach activity surrounding CKD, and establish a clearinghouse of information and educational materials for state legislators. Policymakers can access Women In Government’s Resource Center on the web at www.womeningovernment.org/kidney, by email at kidney@womeningovernment.org, or by calling toll-free, 1-888-333-0164.

About Women In Government

Women In Government is a national, 501(c)(3), non-profit, bi-partisan organization of women state legislators providing leadership opportunities, networking, expert forums and educational resources to address and resolve complex public policy issues. Women In Government leads the nation with a bold, courageous, and passionate vision that empowers and mobilizes all women legislators to effect sound policy. For more information, please visit www.womeningovernment.org.

About The National Kidney Foundation

The National Kidney Foundation, Inc., a major voluntary health organization, seeks to prevent kidney and urinary tract diseases, improve the health and well-being of individuals and families affected by these diseases, and increase the availability of all organs for transplantation. For more information, visit www.kidney.org.

###