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**MEDIA CONTACTS**

Elizabeth Montgomery

[Elizabeth.Montgomery@kidney.org](mailto:Elizabeth.Montgomery@kidney.org) -

212-889-2210 ext. 196

Sue Montgomery

[Susan.Montgomery@ascp.org](mailto:Susan.Montgomery@ascp.org)

312-541-4754

James Ivie

[JIvie@azkidney.org](mailto:JIvie@azkidney.org)

602-840-1644

Lauren Strait (for Sonora Quest)

[LStrait@lavidge.com](mailto:LStrait@lavidge.com)

480.998.2600

**National Kidney Foundation of Arizona  
Expedites National Launch of New Laboratory Tool for  
Early Detection of Kidney Disease**

PHOENIX - August 15, 2019 – A new laboratory tool designed to improve the early detection and management of chronic kidney disease (CKD) will be highlighted during the **ASCP Patient Champions -National Kidney Foundation of Arizona 2019 Patient Symposium** on Wednesday, September 11, 2019, at the Phoenix Convention Center, along with the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) 2019 Annual Meeting.

The symposium will be hosted by ASCP Patient Champions, a program that empowers patients, caregivers and advocates, through education and awareness, about diagnostics, lab tests and pathology follow-up care. This is achieved using the real-life stories of patients and with vital support from the National Kidney Foundation of Arizona (NKF AZ). In recent years, the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) convened a national laboratory engagement collaboration comprised of the leading clinical laboratory testing organizations in America, including ASCP, with the goal of removing barriers to CKD testing.

According to Dr. Robert Cohen, Chairman of the National Kidney Foundation of Arizona's Medical Advisory Board: "The National Kidney Foundation of Arizona has a unique opportunity to expedite implementation of the Kidney Profile in Arizona. At the same time, the ASCP Patient Symposium provides a forum for prompting an international audience of clinical pathology professionals and patients to advocate for expanding the availability of this new diagnostic tool throughout the United States as well as other countries."

The diagnosis of CKD needs both blood and urine testing for optimum risk stratification and tracking of disease progression. Until now, those two aspects of laboratory testing needed to be ordered separately. The new tool that has been established through the collaboration combines blood and urine testing for kidney health in one lab order called the "Kidney Profile." This is important because it is estimated that 37 million American adults have CKD, and 90 percent don't know that they have it.<sup>1</sup>

The two main causes of CKD are diabetes and high blood pressure. The “Kidney Profile” was established, because as many as 60 percent of people with diabetes and more than 90 percent of people with hypertension are not tested for evidence of kidney damage by means of urinalysis.<sup>2</sup> Primary care physicians tend to rely on the blood test that estimates the glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) of the kidneys, but evidence of kidney problems can be detected much earlier by measuring the concentration of protein in the urine (albumin-to-creatinine ratio).

The “Kidney Profile” standardizes the laboratory protocol for testing and reporting results. By presenting evidence of current damage in combination with the level of impact on kidney function, the staging of disease risk and disease progression becomes more precise and informs the need for preventive actions earlier.

Even though the “Kidney Profile” has been endorsed and added to the lab requisition offerings of leading national laboratory organizations, the reach of those organizations is limited to approximately 30 percent of the laboratory testing that is done in the United States. The bulk of laboratory services are provided by local labs and hospitals.<sup>3</sup> A fortunate convergence of opportunities has elevated Arizona to unique prominence due to an unusually broad availability of the “Kidney Profile” in this state.

NKF AZ successfully engaged with Sonora Quest Laboratories to add the “Kidney Profile” to their lab offerings earlier this year. LabCorp already had adopted the “Kidney Profile,” but few doctors are aware of it. The combined reach of Sonora Quest and LabCorp accounts for more than 80 percent of the laboratory services provided in Arizona. As a consequence, Arizona is the *only* state where the “Kidney Profile” can be broadly promoted to primary care, because there is sufficient laboratory participation. The goal of promotion is to make use of the “Kidney Profile” routine standard of care for primary care providers.

The ASCP 2019 Annual Meeting is projected to attract some 2,000 members of the pathology and medical laboratory team from across the United States and internationally. The “Kidney Profile” will be highlighted at the conference in a presentation by Dr. Lee Hilborne, past President of ASCP and an ASCP Patient Champions Advisory Board member. Dr. Hilborne also will participate in a panel discussion during the Patient Symposium with Dr. Robert Cohen, Chair of the NKF AZ Medical Advisory Board; Dr. Gail Guerrero-Tucker, President of the Arizona Academy of Family Physicians; and kidney patient Keith Killough, an NKF AZ Board member.

Additional sessions at the Patient Symposium will be facilitated by Anthony Reed, a kidney transplant recipient and ASCP Patient Champion; and Dr. Christine Snozek, Executive Editor of AACCC Lab Tests Online and Director of Clinical Chemistry and Support Services, Co-director Point-of-Care Testing and Associate Professor of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology, Mayo Clinic Arizona. The intent of highlighting the “Kidney Profile” at this forum before a nationwide audience of stakeholders is to prompt attendees to return to their home states and advocate for expanding its availability to their local constituents and to empower patients to advocate for their own health care through understanding their lab tests and treatment options.

**About National Kidney Foundation of Arizona** | The National Kidney Foundation of Arizona (NKF AZ) is a statewide, non-profit foundation dedicated to providing education about Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) and helping kidney disease sufferers overcome the medical, financial and logistical challenges of CKD. For nearly six decades, NKF AZ has provided dynamic programs, direct patient support, kidney health initiatives and organ donation awareness. For more information, call (602) 840-1644 or visit [www.azkidney.org](http://www.azkidney.org).

**About National Kidney Foundation** | The National Kidney Foundation (NKF) is the largest, most comprehensive and longstanding organization dedicated to the awareness, prevention and treatment of kidney disease. For more information about NKF visit [www.kidney.org](http://www.kidney.org).

**About ASCP Patient Champions** | The ASCP Patient Champions program empowers patients, caregivers and advocates through education and awareness about diagnostics, lab tests, and pathology follow-up care through the real-life stories of patients, our Patient Champions. Through partnering with other patient-focused organizations, our goal is to empower more patients to ask the right questions about laboratory testing and to understand their diagnoses. To learn more, visit [www.ascp.org/patients](http://www.ascp.org/patients).

**About ASCP** | Founded in 1922 in Chicago, ASCP is the world's largest professional membership organization for pathologists and laboratory professionals. ASCP provides excellence in education, certification and advocacy on behalf of patients, anatomic and clinical pathologists and medical laboratory professionals. To learn more, visit <http://www.ascp.org>. Follow us on Twitter at [http://www.twitter.com/ascp\\_chicago](http://www.twitter.com/ascp_chicago) and connect with us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/ASCP.Chicago>.

**About Sonora Quest Laboratories** | Sonora Quest Laboratories, a joint venture between Banner Health and Quest Diagnostics (NYSE: DGX), is part of the nation's largest integrated laboratory system with 3,200 employees serving more than 22,000 patients every day throughout Arizona. Sonora Quest Laboratories is the market share leader in clinical laboratory testing in Arizona, performing more than 60 million diagnostic tests per year. Sonora Quest Laboratories offers a local comprehensive test menu which encompasses routine, molecular, prescription drug monitoring, genetic/genomic, women's health and pathology testing services. [My Lab ReQuest](#) provides consumers direct access to a diverse range of affordable screening tests that can be ordered online at [SonoraQuest.com](http://SonoraQuest.com) or in any of Sonora Quest's 75 patient service centers across Arizona. Ninety-eight percent of all testing is performed at our primary testing facilities located in Tempe, Tucson, Flagstaff, Prescott and Yuma. Sonora Quest Laboratories is accredited by the College of American Pathologists (CAP) which is the gold standard in laboratory accreditation, helping laboratories to maintain accuracy of test results and ensure accurate patient diagnosis. This accreditation ensures the highest standard of care for all laboratory patients as CAP inspectors examine laboratory staff qualifications, equipment, facilities, safety program and records, and overall management. [www.SonoraQuest.com](http://www.SonoraQuest.com).

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Chronic Kidney Disease in the United States, 2019, Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2019.
2. United States Renal Data System. 2016 USRDS annual data report: epidemiology of kidney disease in the United States. Bethesda, MD: National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases; 2016.
3. NKF Laboratory Engagement Plan. 2019. At <https://www.ascp.org/content/get-involved/institute-of-science-technology-policy/ckd-assessment-and-diagnosis>