



NATIONAL MEDIA RELEASE
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Global kidney disease data a ‘wake up call for Canada’

Kidney Foundation says it’s time for a National Chronic Kidney Disease Framework

MONTREAL – A new analysis from the *Global Burden of Disease Study* published in *The Lancet* in November 2025¹, shows that the impact of chronic kidney disease (CKD) has substantially increased over the past three decades. In particular, Canada’s CKD mortality rate rose by more than 70% since 1990 according to Dr. Marcello Tonelli, University of Calgary medical professor and International Society of Nephrology (ISN) President.

“This is markedly higher than the global average, and higher than many other high-income countries. Because the increase was adjusted for population growth and population aging, it represents a true worsening in outcomes,” Dr. Tonelli said. “The new data is a wake-up call for Canada,” continued Dr. Tonelli. “The rising mortality despite stable prevalence strongly suggests there are missed opportunities for early detection and timely treatment among Canadians who develop CKD.”

To tackle CKD, a national strategy is needed as Canadians and health systems can no longer afford to wait. The Kidney Foundation of Canada is developing a Framework for release in Spring 2026 to address critical disparities in awareness, prevention, diagnosis, and care access. The Foundation has actively consulted with leading clinicians, patients, and members of at-risk communities - as well as provincial health systems and leaders - to inform the Framework with an emphasis on early diagnosis and timely intervention.

“Other countries have developed national strategies for CKD, including Australia and the United States,” said Elizabeth Myles, National Executive Director of The Kidney Foundation of Canada. “Canadian patients and those at risk of kidney disease cannot be left behind by a lack of action,” said Ms. Myles. “Improvements made in chronic disease management in Canada for other conditions, such as diabetes, have clearly shown that national action plans are essential for the prevention and control of diseases like CKD.”

Access to care in the earliest stages of kidney disease can prevent kidney failure and its consequences, including significant health care costs, which are in the tens of billions of dollars for CKD. Systemic changes would have an immeasurable positive impact on quality of life for those directly affected by kidney disease, while significantly reducing health care costs.

“The time is now for the adoption of a government-led national kidney strategy to coordinate early detection, enhance kidney health surveillance, and ensure equitable access to care at all stages of the disease,” said

¹ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(25\)01853-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(25)01853-7/fulltext)

Carrie Thibodeau, Kidney Foundation National Director of Programs and Public Policy. “Our strategy includes a requirement for care to be complemented by robust data collection and analysis to support evidence-based policy.”

KEY FACTS ABOUT CKD

- CKD affects 1 in 10 Canadians and is projected to rise from 4.5 million in 2024 to over 6.2 million by 2050, driven by an aging population and the increasing rates of diabetes and hypertension.
- Often developing without noticeable symptoms, many people are not diagnosed until permanent damage has occurred. Early detection and timely intervention can slow disease progression and improve quality of life.
- There is no cure for CKD. When kidney failure occurs, treatment options are limited to dialysis, kidney transplant, or conservative kidney management for those not pursuing these treatments.
- The number of people living with CKD worldwide has risen to 788 million, reflecting sustained growth across almost all regions.
- The global CKD mortality rate has increased by about 6% since 1990, indicating that CKD-related deaths are rising even after accounting for changes in population size and age.
- CKD is now the 9th leading cause of death worldwide. These patterns are driven largely by aging populations and increasing rates of diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease. Indigenous peoples in Canada are disproportionately affected by CKD, with higher prevalence, faster disease progression, and worse clinical outcomes at younger ages, which likely contributes to the national trends.
- In May of this year, following political leadership by Guatemala, strong support from Thailand, and lobbying by a coalition of non-state actors led by the ISN, the 78th World Health Assembly adopted a resolution on kidney health—the first formal recognition of the global importance of CKD prevention and control.²
- The resolution called on Canada and all other member states to integrate kidney care into national strategies; enhance prevention, early detection, and timely management of kidney disease; strengthen primary care to manage CKD and its complications; expand access to kidney replacement therapies, especially kidney transplantation; and improve national capacity for measuring burden, progress, and return on investment.

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The Kidney Foundation of Canada is the leading charity committed to eliminating the burden of kidney disease. Efforts include funding innovative research, advocating for improved access to high quality care, increasing public awareness of kidney health and organ donation, and providing education and support to the over 4 million Canadians affected by kidney disease. Learn more at kidney.ca.

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² https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA78/A78_R6-en.pdf