

# Hundreds waiting for kidney transplants

Kidney disease is common but often invisible

**SUBMITTED BY THE KIDNEY FOUNDATION OF WESTERN NEW YORK**

March is National Kidney Month, and health advocates are calling attention to the prevalence of kidney disease. Local organizations are also raising awareness of the need for organ donors.

The Kidney Foundation of Western New York is highlighting the stories of people waiting for transplants, including Diana Leising of Sanborn. Leising's kidney function has been declining, and she's seeking a transplant through Erie County Medical Center. Her husband, Dan, had hoped to become a living kidney donor, but the family learned in November that would not be possible.

"I don't want much, just to watch my youngest graduate from high school and see my boys get married and have their children," Leising posted through the Kidney Connection, a local nonprofit. People awaiting a transplant can share their need at kidneyconnection.org, in hopes of finding someone to give a kidney. Leising added, "I put

it in God's hands and pray that I get a gracious donor."

More than one in eight Western New York adults has been diagnosed with chronic kidney disease. Undiagnosed kidney problems are also common. A person can lose as much as 90% of kidney function before noticing symptoms. The leading causes of chronic kidney disease are diabetes and high blood pressure. People with heart disease and those with a family history of kidney failure are also at higher risk.

For those who reach kidney failure, dialysis or a transplant are the only ways to stay alive. The kidney is the most needed organ for transplantation. People with kidney failure can receive transplanted organ from a deceased donor or from a living donor.

More than 80 people are on the active kidney transplant waiting list at Erie County Medical Center. Statewide, more than 7,200 people need a kidney. Nationally, the number is above 90,000.



Diana Leising (Submitted photo)

More than 12,500 have been waiting for more than five years to receive a lifesaving transplant.

This March, the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases is encouraging everyone to build a personalized path to better kidney care through these steps:

√ Be an active participant in

your care: Work with your health care team to create a treatment plan that fits your lifestyle, mobility, health status and dietary needs.

√ Follow your care plan: Take medicine as prescribed and stay up to date on vaccines. The coronavirus and flu vaccines are especially important for people with kidney disease, who may be more likely to get very sick from COVID-19 or the flu.

√ Build a kidney healthy lifestyle: Try to incorporate healthy habits into your daily schedule. This

can include healthy foods and beverages you enjoy, physical activity like walking or taking the stairs to help you stay active and manage your weight, or a sleep routine that helps you get enough rest.

Thursday, March 10, is World Kidney Day. Niagara Falls will be lit up in yellow and blue for 15

minutes starting at 10 p.m. that evening to raise awareness about kidney health. Anyone wishing to observe the falls from the park must follow public health guidelines.

More information is available at kfwny.org, the Kidney Foundation of Western New York's social media, or by calling 716-529-4390. The foundation thanks the Niagara Falls Illumination Board and other community partners for helping to raise awareness about kidney health.

The Kidney Foundation of Western New York works to increase awareness of kidney disease, provide education on kidney health, and support patients and their families. The locally based non-profit serves Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans and Wyoming counties.

For more information on National Kidney Month, visit <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/community-health-outreach/national-kidney-month>.

## From Niagara Falls to Mario Cuomo Bridge: NYS shines light on problem gambling

**SUBMITTED BY THE NEW YORK COUNCIL ON PROBLEM GAMBLING**

With the rapid expansion of gambling and the record-breaking introduction of mobile sports betting, there is no better time to bring the issue of problem gambling to the forefront. The New York Council on Problem Gambling (NYCPG) and its seven regional Problem Gambling Resource Centers (PGRCs) are calling on everyone to "shine the light" on problem gambling during Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM) this March.

The council's newest effort and a driving force behind this year's "Shine the Light" theme involves several notable places in New York joining NYCPG and its PGRCs to recognize March as Problem Gambling Awareness Month.

"Bringing statewide attention to this issue means supporting our friends and neighbors," says Angela DiRosa, program manager for the Western NY PGRC. "We know that an increase in availability of any gambling leads to an increase of problems. Having access 24 hours a day and being able to place an endless number of wagers compounds that. We want to make sure that people know they're not alone, and there's support available before people find themselves in a dire situation."

Landmarks will be lit yellow on Tuesday, March 8. Sites include Niagara Falls and Seneca One Tower in Buffalo.

During the month of March, the council will shine the light on problem gambling, focusing on one theme each week and encouraging partners, allies and community members to take action that raises awareness. Details and resources can be found at <http://nyproblemgambling.org/pgam/>.

Highlights of the statewide plans for March include the following:

- √ March 6: Open Gamblers Anonymous meeting via Zoom
- √ March 8: Gambling Disorder Screening Day
- √ March 8: "Shine the Light Night"
- √ March 9-10: NYCPG annual conference
- √ March 10: "Shine the Light" rally
- √ Multiple webinars and trainings, Facebook Live Events, and more.

More than 600,000 adults residing in New York are experiencing problems related to their gambling. According to the National Council on Problem Gambling, 2 million U.S. adults (1%) are estimated to meet criteria for severe gambling problems in a given year. Another 4-6 million (2%-3%) would be considered to have mild or moderate gambling problems; that

is, they meet one of more of the criteria and are experiencing problems due to their gambling behavior. The effects of problem gambling are not isolated to the individual who is gambling. It's been estimated that 8-10 additional people can be negatively affected by one person's gambling behaviors (Petry et al, 2005). These people include family members, friends, neighbors and even coworkers.

The press release said, "Not only do we all need to shine the light on the issue of problem gambling, we want our lights to be a beacon for anyone who might be negatively affected by a gambling problems - there is hope and help! To learn more, take action, or find help visit <http://nyproblemgambling.org/pgam/>."

The PGRC is a program of the New York Council on Problem Gambling dedicated to addressing the issue of problem gambling within New York. The vision of the PGRC is the positive transformation of lives harmed by problem gambling. The PGRC focuses efforts on

increasing public awareness of problem gambling; connecting clients with treatment, recovery and support services; and promoting healthy lifestyles that foster freedom from problem gambling. Visit [www.NYProblemGamblingHELP.org](http://www.NYProblemGamblingHELP.org) to learn more about the PGRC network.

The New York Council on Problem Gambling is a not-for-profit independent corporation dedicated to increasing public awareness about problem and compulsive gambling, and advocating for support services and treatment for persons adversely affected by problem gambling. NYCPG maintains a neutral

stance on gambling, and is governed by a board of directors. Find out more at [www.NYProblemGambling.org](http://www.NYProblemGambling.org).

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