

# Meeting with Congress

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## Sample Script

For Meeting with Your Senator or Representative

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Prepared for weKAN Patient Activists by the  
Renal Support Network  
advocating for:

## Kidney Care Quality and Education Act of 2007 H.R. 1193 • S. 691

Introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by  
Rep. Dave Camp (R-MI) and Rep. John Lewis (D-GA)

Introduced in the U.S. Senate by  
Sen. Kent Conrad (D-ND)

## TIPS

- Don't use abbreviations when speaking (CKD, ESRD, PD, etc.) without explaining them. (Better yet, don't use them at all.)
- Don't assume that the person knows what you are talking about. Be precise.
- It is not necessary to mention every item contained within the bill. (Pick those items of most relevance/importance to you.)

## 1. WHO YOU ARE

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I live in \_\_\_\_\_.  
I've been a kidney patient for \_\_\_\_\_ years.

## 2. WHY YOU ARE THERE

### House Version:

I'm here to encourage Representative \_\_\_\_\_ to **co-sponsor** the **bipartisan** bill H.R. 1193 – the “Kidney Care Quality and Education Act of 2007” – which was introduced by Representative Dave Camp (Republican from Michigan) and Representative John Lewis (Democrat from Georgia).

### Senate Version:

I'm here to encourage Senator \_\_\_\_\_ to **co-sponsor** the **bipartisan** bill S. 691 – the “Kidney Care Quality and Education Act of 2007” – which was introduced by Senator Kent Conrad (Democrat from North Dakota).

## 3. YOUR BACKGROUND

I'm here in Washington with \_\_\_\_\_ other kidney patients and their families from around the country, representing \_\_\_\_\_ states.

We are part of what is known as “**weKAN**” – the “Wellness & Education Kidney Advocacy Network.”

weKAN is a program of the **Renal Support Network** – a nonprofit, patient-run organization, established in 1993, that helps people who have chronic, or long-term, kidney disease with non-medical needs such as education, self-advocacy, and employment.

## NOTES

## 4. THE BILL

We consider passage of this bill to be especially important because it will impact more than **20 million Americans** (1 in 9 people in the U.S.) who are in the early stages of kidney disease, most of whom don't even know it.

The bill provides **education** that could help prevent people from developing **kidney failure**, or at least delay its onset. Not only would kidney failure dramatically change the **quality of their lives**, it would result in substantial **cost** to Medicare... which, as you know, pays for the majority of renal care in this country.

This education — which also would target physicians who do not specialize in kidney disease — will focus on ways to treat **high blood pressure** and **diabetes**, the **two leading causes** of kidney failure.

The bill also will help the 350,000 Americans whose kidneys have already failed and are being kept alive by “**dialysis**.” That number is expected to double by the year 2010. There are approximately \_\_\_\_\_ people on dialysis in the state of \_\_\_\_\_ alone.

*[NOTE: For assistance in obtaining the number of CKD patients in your state, please contact the Renal Support Network via email: [info@rsnhope.org](mailto:info@rsnhope.org) or phone: 818-543-0896.]*

## 5. PATIENT'S STORY

### On Dialysis:

I am a dialysis patient. My kidneys failed \_\_\_\_\_ years ago. **Dialysis has kept me alive**. It takes the place of my kidneys by removing toxins and fluid from my blood. *[Or variation of patient's individual story.]*

### With Transplant:

I used to be a dialysis patient. My kidneys failed \_\_\_\_\_ years ago. **I was kept alive by dialysis**, which takes the place of the kidneys by removing toxins and fluid from the blood. Fortunately, \_\_\_\_\_ years ago, I received a kidney transplant. But I was one of the lucky ones. About 75,000 dialysis patients are currently on the national transplant waiting list, and the average wait is about 7 years. *[Or variation of patient's individual story.]*

## 6. CONCERNS & FEATURES OF THE BILL

I am “**living proof**” that the **Medicare End-Stage Renal Disease Program** works! My concern is that I want it to continue to work.

Kidney disease treatment is the **only** treatment reimbursed by Medicare that does not include an annual adjustment for inflation.

There's a saying among dialysis patients: “We dialyze to live, not live to dialyze.”

## NOTES

**We're people first... and patients second.** And we represent all segments of society. Our lives did not stop when we developed kidney failure. In fact, dialysis has kept some people alive for more than 30 years. But people with kidney failure will not continue to enjoy life, and will not continue to be **productive**, if the quality of their care is compromised.

Quality of life is the heart of what's important to patients. A simple way to remember the provisions of this bill is: **HEART**.

**H**ome dialysis: seeking to understand the barriers to the adoption of different treatment modalities by patients.

**E**ducation: providing educational sessions for Medicare beneficiaries with Stage IV CKD to teach them how to slow the progression of the disease.

**A**wareness: creating public and patient education initiatives to increase awareness about CKD and to help patients learn self-management skills that prevent and control CKD.

**R**eimbursement: establishing a three-year Continuous Quality Improvement Initiative that would reward providers for quality improvement and outcomes. If the provider meets these goals, they receive a bonus.

**T**echnicians: establishing a uniform training for patient-care dialysis technicians.

**To read the bill in its entirety:**

- ◆ Go to <http://thomas.loc.gov> (omit "www")
- ◆ Choose "enter bill number"
- ◆ Type H.R. 1193 or S. 691 in the box

## 7. CLOSING COMMENTS

When Congress committed in 1972 to provide kidney patients with lifesaving therapy, it intended that they receive the best care available.

We ask that Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_ become a co-sponsor of this bill to ensure that this commitment continues.

**Visit to a Dialysis Facility:**

We would be glad to arrange a visit to a dialysis facility for Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_, either here in Washington or in his/her hometown.

In mid-August, members of RSN's weKAN program reach out to their legislative officials while they are working in their home district. Perhaps that would be a good time for Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_ to visit a unit in \_\_\_\_\_ (home state).

We would be glad to take care of the details, and I would be glad to accompany Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_ on his/her visit.

Or, if you or Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_ would prefer to visit a unit in the Washington area, we can arrange for you to be accompanied by a weKAN member.

On behalf of the members of the Renal Support Network's weKAN program and everyone affected by chronic kidney disease, I would like to thank you, Rep./Sen. \_\_\_\_\_ and your staff, for your time and consideration.

**8. SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION**

As of June \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ Senators and \_\_\_\_\_ Representatives have signed on as co-sponsors of the bill.

The bill is supported by the major organizations in the renal care community, including:

- ✓ Renal Support Network
- ✓ National Kidney Foundation
- ✓ American Kidney Fund
- ✓ American Nephrology Nurses' Association
- ✓ Renal Physicians Association
- ✓ Kidney Care Partners (see listing on next page)



2550 M St NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
(202) 457-6620  
[www.kidneycarepartners.org](http://www.kidneycarepartners.org)

Abbott Laboratories  
American Kidney Fund  
American Nephrology Nurses' Association  
American Regent, Inc.  
American Renal Associates, Inc.  
American Society of Nephrology  
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology  
Amgen  
Baxter Healthcare Corporation  
California Dialysis Council  
Centers for Dialysis Care  
DaVita, Inc.  
DaVita Patient Citizens  
Fresenius Medical Care North America  
Genzyme  
Medical Education Institute  
National Kidney Foundation  
National Renal Administrators Association  
Northwest Kidney Centers  
Renal Advantage Inc.  
Renal Physicians Association  
Renal Support Network  
Roche  
Satellite Healthcare  
U.S. Renal Care  
Watson Pharma, Inc.

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