



*Walter H. Gardiner, M.D.
Medical Director*

*caribbean
KIDNEY
center*

*5134 Sundial Park
Christiansted, VI 00820
340.773.3227*

February 4, 2009

For Immediate Release

HealthQuest , LLC d.b.a. The Virgin Islands Kidney Center has announced that it will now refer to its dialysis operations as the Caribbean Kidney Center. This change is part of HealthQuest's plan to participate in the provision and expansion of dialysis services throughout the Caribbean. "The expansion of hemodialysis services throughout the Caribbean is viewed as a necessary element of healthcare services on many islands throughout the Caribbean" says W.H. Gardiner, M.D., Medical Director and principal owner of HealthQuest, LLC. Dr. Gardiner, a native of Tobago and a graduate of the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, established his first outpatient dialysis facility in 1980. Dr. Gardiner grew the operation to include seven facilities throughout Tennessee and Kentucky. Dr. Gardiner became involved in the provision of dialysis services in the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1995 when he spearheaded the improvement of dialysis services at the Juan F. Luis Hospital on St. Croix. The only formally trained hypertension specialist on St. Croix, Dr. Gardiner established an independent dialysis and medical practice on St. Croix in 2003 and provides out patient dialysis and internal medicine services (diabetes and hypertension management) to residents and visitors on St. Croix. The Caribbean Kidney Center is committed to reducing the number of persons in the Territory who require dialysis as a result of kidney failure. This will be achieved through its emphasis on the early detection and intervention in patients with renal disease.



*Walter H. Gardiner, M.D.
Medical Director*

*caribbean
KIDNEY
center*

*5134 Sundial Park
Christiansted, VI 00820
340.773.3227*

The need for dialysis services is steadily growing in the Virgin Islands especially so on the island of St. Croix. The Virgin Islands Department of Health has reported that the prevalence of diabetes on St. Croix is twice the rate as that for other islands in the eastern Caribbean.

According to recent data compiled by the Trans Atlantic Renal Council, sixty three percent of the newly diagnosed cases of renal disease have a primary diagnosis of diabetic nephropathy, up from 45% in 1990. Estimates are that as many as 15% of youths and 61% of adults in the Virgin Islands are now overweight or obese. Research has suggested a link between obesity and the development of adult onset or Type II diabetes. “Various Caribbean Governments see the need to be in a position to provide this life saving treatment in a financially responsible manner” adds Dr. Gardiner. “They see our high quality and successful operation here on St. Croix as a model for the Caribbean. “We are engaged in discussions to share our knowledge and expertise so that similar operations can be established throughout the region.” The Caribbean Kidney Center has invaluable experience in dealing with operational issues such as water filtration, medical waste disposal, and supply and inventory management. These are all real challenges in the Territory and are all vital elements to a safe and effective dialysis operation.

Staffing is another vital element to dialysis operations. HealthQuest, through its Caribbean Kidney Center and in conjunction with the University of the Virgin Islands Community Engagement and Lifelong Learning program (UVI Cell) is developing a training program for dialysis technicians using the Caribbean Kidney Center as the training site. According to Dr. Gardiner, well trained staff is a real necessity to sustain ongoing dialysis operations. “Dialysis



*Walter H. Gardiner, M.D.
Medical Director*

*caribbean
KIDNEY
center*

*5134 Sundial Park
Christiansted, VI 00820
340.773.3227*

is a specialized operation requiring specialized training. “Once you establish an operation and have patients depending on you to sustain their lives, you must ensure a pool of properly trained staff. “We hope to address that need for qualified staff throughout the region using the UVI Cell program.”

Obtain additional information or contact Dr. W.H. Gardiner at info@vikidneycenter.com.

##