



Press Release

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## **ANNA Launches Online Tool to Get Nurses to COVID-19 Hotspots**

***Coronavirus kidney crisis sparks dire need for nephrology nurses.***

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PITMAN, NJ – Responding to a critical shortage of nephrology nurses as kidney complications spike in COVID-19 patients, the [American Nephrology Nurses Association \(ANNA\)](#) has launched a "[COVID-19 Nephrology Nurse Surge Support](#)" [interactive map](#) that identifies hotspots across the U.S. and allows nurses to answer facilities' calls for help.

The map, which identifies the hardest hit states, also allows hospitals, facilities, and other organizations to submit information about their current needs for nephrology nursing staff, matching nurses with the facilities most in need.

"The tool works both ways: Nurses search the map by state to quickly identify and contact facilities with openings, and facilities also use the map to provide their name, location, type of health care professionals and specific practice areas they need to fill," ANNA President Lillian Pryor, MSN, RN, CNN, said.

ANNA launched the tool after states and organizations sounded the alarm for help to recruit nephrology nurses, Pryor said. Life-threatening kidney complications from the coronavirus have been increasingly reported, creating a nationwide emergency.

"The New York State Department of Health contacted us, as well as many other kidney and health care organizations, asking if ANNA could help recruit nephrology nurses and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) for the hotspots," Pryor said. "We knew we needed to quickly come up with a way to address this need for facilities facing a shortage of frontline providers."

The [Surge Support map](#) highlights in red the states with the most critical need for nurses, APRNs, and patient care technicians (PCTs) with expertise in caring for patients with kidney failure, including dialysis. Some facilities are also offering to educate and train nurses and technicians without experience.

"The surge tool is designed to match any facility in need with available kidney health care providers," ANNA Executive Director Tamara Kear, PhD, RN, CNN, FAAN, said. "This has been a top-priority project for ANNA, and we are collaborating across the kidney community to meet the current demand. We're continuously updating the map and disseminating information throughout the health care industry."

ANNA has had "tremendous support from the NY State Department of Health throughout the entire process," and a broad network of nephrology nurses, experts, organizations, and leaders collaborated to make the surge tool as effective as possible, Dr. Kear said.

Given the life-threatening situation of many COVID-19 patients, Dr. Kear said there's no time to waste.

"Patients with kidney failure need nurses with nephrology training, and dialysis requires high-level skills and knowledge. Once onsite, nephrology nurses can also augment the skills of critical care nurses managing kidney replacement therapies in critical care units."

Dr. Kear said dialysis providers, hospitals, health systems, departments of health, COVID-19 surge centers, and any entity in need of nephrology nurses, APRNs, or PCTs, are welcome to use the surge tool, and ANNA is encouraging these systems to help spread the word.

"While ANNA is not coordinating placement of nurses and technicians, we are serving as the conduit to make the connections."

According to Pryor, ANNA has compiled and posted on the page a list of resources, such as travel packages, to further help the nurses and facilities using the surge tool.

"These resources include hotels and airlines offering free or discounted offers to health care workers providing frontline care," she said. Pryor encouraged nurses and facilities to keep checking the [Surge Support webpage](#) for updates, new links, and additional information.

### **Alarming Increase in COVID-10 Kidney-Related Complications**

Recent estimates released by *Kidney International* showed 34-63% of COVID-19 patients experience some form of kidney involvement upon admission. Other studies have indicated 20-40% of patients progress to develop kidney failure.

In addition, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, CNN, and *Politico* all filed reports this month about the sudden upswing in COVID-19 patients experiencing kidney failure and the shortage of machines, supplies, and health care professionals needed for emergency dialysis and other treatments.

### **ANNA Offering Free Nephrology Education for Nurses**

Along with the Surge Support tool, ANNA is offering continuing nursing education (CNE) for free to both nephrology and non-nephrology nurses. [Four online bundles](#) are available and address the following areas:

- Acute Kidney Injury
- Continuous Renal Replacement Therapy
- Hemodialysis
- Peritoneal Dialysis

Each bundle includes multiple educational programs and free contact hours and can be accessed at [annanurse.org/freekidneyCE](http://annanurse.org/freekidneyCE).

**Members of the media:** To interview Lillian Pryor or Tamara Kear, please contact ANNA Communications Director Janet D'Alesandro at [janetd@ajj.com](mailto:janetd@ajj.com).

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### About ANNA

The [American Nephrology Nurses Association \(ANNA\)](#) is a professional nursing association comprising more than 8,300 nephrology nurses. ANNA improves members' lives through education, advocacy, networking, and science.



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