

# Why Veterans Oppose the Dangerous & Costly Dialysis Proposition

## Special Interest Proposition Jeopardizes the Lives of Veterans on Dialysis, While Increasing Health Care Costs for All

Patients with kidney failure rely on dialysis to stay alive, and veterans are more than 3 times more likely to have end-stage renal disease than the general population. But, one special interest is promoting a dangerous and costly dialysis proposition that would reduce access to care for dialysis patients, putting their lives at risk. This proposition would also hurt all Californians by making us wait longer to see our doctors and increasing health care costs by hundreds of millions of dollars annually. Here's why leading veterans groups, doctors, patients and others all oppose this dangerous and costly dialysis proposition:

### Veterans Have Higher Rates of Kidney Disease

- ▶ Veterans are 3.2 times more likely to have end-stage renal disease (ESRD) than the general population (604 vs. 187 per 100,000).<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ According to the most recent figures from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the rate of veterans nationally with kidney disease grew by 13% from 2008 - 2013.<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ In California, there are only seven VA medical facilities, not nearly enough to treat all veterans in need of dialysis.
- ▶ Therefore, the majority of veterans get their dialysis treatment at community dialysis clinics, not the VA. This allows veterans on dialysis the ability to receive their dialysis conveniently close to home, without having to travel long distances to VA medical facilities.
- ▶ If this proposition passes, access to dialysis care for veterans would be at risk.

### Jeopardizes Access to Dialysis Care, Putting Patient Lives at Risk

- ▶ Dialysis does the job of an individual's failed kidneys, removing toxins from the body. Dialysis is not optional. **Missing even a single treatment increases a patient's risk of death by 30%.**
- ▶ A study by the Berkeley Research Group found that the measure's requirement of a "physician on-site at all times" would increase dialysis treatment costs by \$320 million every year and that nearly **half of the clinics in the state would become financially unsustainable.**
- ▶ According to the independent, non-partisan Legislative Analyst: "*Given the higher costs due to the measure, some governing entities **may decide to close some clinics.***"
- ▶ This proposition **could force hundreds of dialysis clinics to cut back services or shut down** completely – making it more difficult for dialysis patients to access their life-saving treatments.
- ▶ Without access to community clinics, veterans will have to travel long distances to seek treatment in a hospital, VA facility or end up in already overcrowded emergency rooms.

## Makes our Doctor Shortage Worse

- ▶ Currently, each dialysis patient is already under the care of their own doctor who is a kidney specialist. **Dialysis treatments are administered by registered nurses and licensed dialysis technicians specifically trained in kidney dialysis care.** And every dialysis clinic is required by law to have a physician medical director who monitors a clinic's care.
- ▶ It makes no sense to require a full-time physician to sit around in a dialysis clinic, when they won't even be involved in patient care.
- ▶ There are 600 dialysis clinics in California. This proposition **will take thousands of practicing doctors away from their current patients** and push them into bureaucratic, non-care roles at dialysis clinics – **making it harder for all of us to get appointments with our doctors and treatment at our hospitals.**

## Increases Health Care Costs for Taxpayers and Consumers

- ▶ According to the Legislative Analyst, the measure would result in *"Increased state and local health care costs ... resulting from increased dialysis treatment costs."*
- ▶ Analysis done by the Berkeley Research Group found this measure would **increase dialysis treatment costs by \$320 million every year.**
- ▶ That will increase costs for all of us in the form of **higher insurance premiums** and **higher taxes** for government-sponsored health care.

## Another Abuse by a Special Interest that Puts Patients at Risk

- ▶ This measure is being sponsored by the United Healthcare Workers West (UHW) union which bankrolled another dialysis proposition (Prop 8) in 2018. Voters overwhelmingly rejected Prop 8 by 20 points.
- ▶ This same union has spent more than \$52 million bankrolling 29 harmful ballot measures over the past 8 years.
- ▶ While unions have the right to try to unionize workers, it's not right to abuse the initiative system, ignore the will of the voters and use vulnerable patients as political pawns.



**Puts patients at risk**



**Makes doctor shortage worse**



**Increases health care costs**



**Abuse by a special interest**

**STOP**  
**DANGEROUS**  
**& COSTLY**  
**Dialysis Proposition**

**NoDialysisProp.com**

1. BMC Health Services Research and US Renal Data System <https://bmchealthservres.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1472-6963-13-26#CR2>  
2. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Fact Sheet [https://www.va.gov/HEALTH/services/renal/documents/Kidney\\_Disease\\_and\\_Dialysis\\_Services\\_Fact%20Sheet\\_April\\_2015.pdf](https://www.va.gov/HEALTH/services/renal/documents/Kidney_Disease_and_Dialysis_Services_Fact%20Sheet_April_2015.pdf)

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