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**BAXTER LAUNCHES INITIATIVE TO INCREASE AWARENESS AND EDUCATION IN BLACK COMMUNITIES ABOUT KIDNEY HEALTH AND MANAGING CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE**

- *During National Kidney Month, Baxter joins forces with not-for-profit organizations The Links and the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois*
- *Initiative aims to improve kidney health in the Black community, encourage early diagnosis and intervention of chronic kidney disease*
- *Partnership builds on Baxter's Activating Change Today initiative to advance inclusion and racial justice*

**DEERFIELD, Ill., and WASHINGTON, D.C., MARCH 29, 2021** – Baxter International Inc. (NYSE:BAX), a leading global medical products company, and the Central Area of The Links, Incorporated, an international not-for-profit comprised of 16,000 women of color, announce a new partnership to bring awareness and resources to the disproportionate challenges affecting Black Americans related to kidney health. Through the partnership, Baxter is committing \$600,000 to fund grants to local Links chapters in the organization's 17-state U.S. Central Area over a nine-month period. Local chapters will engage with area healthcare professionals, faith-based organizations, civic leaders and other influential community members to develop programs and interventions focused on the prevention, detection, and management of chronic kidney disease (CKD).

Black Americans have some of the highest incidence rates of diabetes and high blood pressure – the two leading causes of kidney disease. In fact, Black adults in the United States are at increased risk of developing at rates far exceeding those for white adults, and are three times more likely to develop kidney failure than their white counterparts.<sup>1</sup> Despite these staggering statistics, many Americans are unaware they have kidney disease.



“The Links has a proven track record of building trust and awareness for health issues in the communities they serve,” said Guillermo Amezcua, area vice president of Baxter’s U.S. renal business. “We are excited to arm local chapters with more tools and resources to help empower the Black community around kidney health.”

A component of Baxter’s [ACT: Activating Change Today initiative](#), the partnership with The Links includes the debut of the Black Kidney Awareness, Resources and Education (K.A.R.E.) program. In addition to receiving grant funding, local chapters will also have access to an educational toolkit developed by The National Kidney Foundation of Illinois that focuses on the unique barriers facing the Black community. The toolkit content incorporates patient, clinician, clinical, and systemic factors contributing to the disproportionate disparities Black Americans face in healthcare and provides actionable tips and guidance for improving kidney health and effectively managing kidney disease.

“The vision of The Links, Incorporated is to enrich the communities we serve and improve the quality of life for people of African descent,” said Kimberly Jeffries Leonard, Ph.D., and national president of The Links, Incorporated. “The Black K.A.R.E. program complements the work our Central Area chapters are already implementing through our Health and Human Services facet, and amplifies our ability to help combat a major chronic health disparity that persists in Black communities.”

“We know there are many medical and nonmedical factors that impact kidney health, such as where and how a person lives,” adds Jackie Burgess Bishop, FACHE, CEO at The National Kidney Foundation of Illinois. “Through the Black K.A.R.E. program and toolkit, we are combining the unique insights of this community and offering tailored tools to help guide early awareness, education and intervention.”

#### **About ACT: Activating Change Today**

Baxter launched [ACT: Activating Change Today](#), a multidimensional and multiyear initiative to advance inclusion and racial justice within the workplace and within the communities and markets the company serves, in 2020. Working in close collaboration with the Baxter Black Alliance business resource group, Baxter’s commitment through ACT is about taking action and driving results to achieve meaningful, sustainable change within and beyond Baxter. The partnership between Baxter and The Links and NKFI follows the recent announcement of a three-year, \$2 million partnership



between the Baxter International Foundation and the American Diabetes Association® (ADA) as part of the ADA's Health Equity Now (HEN) platform. The community-based program will focus on nutrition and technology as key drivers in removing barriers to diabetes care and promoting diabetes prevention to address health disparities in Chicago's underserved Black communities.

### **About Baxter**

Every day, millions of patients and caregivers rely on Baxter's leading portfolio of critical care, nutrition, renal, hospital and surgical products. For more than 85 years, we've been operating at the critical intersection where innovations that save and sustain lives meet the healthcare providers that make it happen. With products, technologies and therapies available in more than 100 countries, Baxter's employees worldwide are now building upon the company's rich heritage of medical breakthroughs to advance the next generation of transformative healthcare innovations. To learn more, visit [www.baxter.com](http://www.baxter.com) and follow us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).

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### **About The Links, Incorporated**

The Links, Incorporated is an international, not-for-profit corporation, established in 1946. The membership consists of more than 16,000 professional women of African descent in 292 chapters located in 41 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, and the United Kingdom. It is one of the nation's oldest and largest volunteer service organizations of extraordinary women who are committed to enriching, sustaining and ensuring the culture and economic survival of African Americans and other persons of African ancestry. Members of The Links, Incorporated contribute more than 1 million documented hours of community service annually — strengthening their communities and enhancing the nation. For more information, visit [www.linksinc.org](http://www.linksinc.org).

The Central Area of The Links, Incorporated is comprised of 70 chapters in 17 states with more than 3,500 influential women who work as volunteers toward a common vision by engaging organizations and individuals in partnership. Members contribute more than 54,000 documented hours of community service annually, strengthening their communities and enhancing the region.

### **About The National Kidney Foundation of Illinois**

The National Kidney Foundation of Illinois improves the health and well-being of people at risk for or affected by kidney disease through prevention, education and empowerment. The NKFI is a lifeline for all people affected by kidney disease. As pioneers of scientific research and innovation, the NKFI focuses on the whole patient through the lens of kidney health. Relentless in its work, the Foundation improves lives through action, education and accelerating change.

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Chronic Kidney Disease Fact Sheet, 2017. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2017.