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**FIRST INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ALBUMINURIA TO BE HELD IN
NEW YORK CITY IN MAY 2004**

Experts from around the world to lead discussions on the importance of a urinary protein in the identification and treatment of kidney and cardiovascular disease

NEW YORK, NY – January 15, 2003 – The National Kidney Foundation and the International Society of Nephrology announced today that they will organize a first-of-its kind, three-day event to discuss the role of a critical urinary protein as an independent disease marker and therapy target for kidney and cardiovascular disease. The urinary protein called albumin is increasingly recognized as the earliest sign of vascular damage in both the kidney and the heart.

The symposium will focus on increasing awareness of the importance of identifying excess amounts of the protein albumin in urine, a warning sign of potential kidney and cardiovascular disease. During the event, some of the world's most prominent experts will present to the international medical community the most up-to-date information on the role of albuminuria and how results of different tests for the condition can be used to detect and treat kidney disease and other serious conditions. The international symposium, entitled "The Role of Albuminuria in Health and Disease; Predicting Outcomes and Targets for Therapy," will take place on May 16-18, 2004. It is organized by the National Kidney Foundation and the International Society of Nephrology with the support of the American Society of Nephrology and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

"Now that we have developed guidelines to help doctors manage chronic kidney disease, we are focusing on understanding more about early warning signs like albuminuria – what it means and how doctors can best use tests of urinary protein to detect kidney disease in its earliest stages. Kidney disease is strongly linked to heart disease and the presence of albuminuria or urinary protein is a predictor of worse outcomes for both kidney and heart patients," said Dr. Brian Pereira, president of the National Kidney Foundation.

"The International Society of Nephrology recognizes the increasing importance of albuminuria as a marker for disease and target for treatment," said Dr. Jan Weening, president of the International Society of Nephrology. "We feel that it is now important to develop an international consensus and plan for action for effectively measuring albumin. We are pleased to work with the National Kidney Foundation in organizing this important meeting to increase international cooperation in this effort, which we hope will influence patient care around the globe."

Currently, more than 20 million Americans – around one in nine adults -- have chronic kidney disease. More than 20 million more are at increased risk for developing kidney disease, and most don't even know it. Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure in the U.S., and patients with diabetes are at an increased risk of kidney and cardiovascular disease.

For many patients, the first sign of kidney disease is albuminuria, in which damaged kidneys allow traces of the protein albumin to spill into urine. The condition, which can also serve as an early warning sign of cardiovascular disease, can be detected earlier using a relatively inexpensive urine test, and the National Kidney Foundation recommends that every diabetic receive the test at least once per year. Numerous studies show that early detection and treatment of kidney disease can slow, halt or even reverse its progression.

“With a growing body of clinical data supporting the validity of albumin as a disease marker and the potential of early identification of this condition to help treat patients, it is becoming clear that accurate testing for urinary protein in physical examinations could become as important as annual blood pressure and cholesterol screening,” said Dr. Dick de Zeeuw, Professor and Head of the Department of Clinical Pharmacology of the University of Groningen in The Netherlands and the Symposium’s Chairman. “We hope that discussions about this important research will provide all attendees with an overall clinical understanding of the protein albumin, and help the group build toward a consensus opinion regarding the future of this important marker.”

Throughout the three-day event, sponsored by AusAm Biotechnologies, Inc., renowned physicians and researchers will present data from landmark epidemiology studies, including: PREVENT (Prevention of Renal and Vascular End Stage Disease) HOPE (Heart Outcomes Prevention Evaluation) AUSDIAB (Australian Diabetes, Obesity and Lifestyle Study) AASK (African – American Study of Kidney Disease and Hypertension) The event will culminate with a series of presentations focusing on the inclusion of albumin as a target in therapy guidelines.

“Our goal in convening this symposium of the most prominent clinical and research professionals in this field is to present the latest research and discuss the best ways to use this information in clinical practice to solve widespread global medical issues and help hundreds of thousands of patients worldwide,” said Dr. Gavin Becker, Professor and Director of Nephrology and Clinical Director of the North West Dialysis Service at the Royal Melbourne Hospital in Melbourne, Australia and NKF Kidney Disease Outcome Quality Initiative Advisory Board Member.

The National Kidney Foundation is a major voluntary health organization, which seeks to prevent kidney and urinary tract diseases, improve the health and well-being of individuals and families affected by these diseases, and increase the availability of all organs for transplants.

Since its foundation in 1960, the International Society of Nephrology (ISN) has pursued the worldwide advancement of education, science and patient care in nephrology. This goal was achieved by means of the Society’s journal and the organization of international congresses and symposia. In order to reach its colleagues and patients in economically less developed countries, the ISN expanded its activities as of 1980 by a large number of specific programs aimed at these regions.

AusAm Biotechnologies, Inc. is a biopharmaceutical company, developing breakthrough diagnostic and therapeutic products it believes will change the landscape of disease detection and treatment.

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