Dear Friends,

Some of you may know that I have chronic kidney disease. Unfortunately, it has gotten worse over time. My kidneys no longer work well enough to keep me alive and continue my lifelong work and passion to advocate for Indigenous Title and Rights and the environment, and to do the things I enjoy most, like spending time with my wonderful wife Joan, our five children and fifteen grandchildren, and being out on our territory. My treatment options are limited to dialysis treatments or a kidney transplant, which is why I am reaching out publicly now.

I am a proud member of the Syilx Nation where I have been Chair of the Okanagan Nation Alliance for 15 years, and a member of the Penticton Indian Band where I was on Chief and Council for 24 years, 14 of which I was Band Chief. Currently I am in my 8th consecutive three-year term as President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. My traditional name is A?sir?t, which loosely translates into “loon” and which my elders bestowed on me because they say my voice can be heard rising clearly across and through Turtle Island. I received an honorary Doctor of Laws from the University of British Columbia in 2019 in recognition of my life-long advocacy and work.

Getting regular dialysis treatments, usually three times a week for four hours at a time, will help my kidneys do their job and keep me alive, but a transplant would offer me more freedom and the ability to live a longer, healthier, more normal life.

However, finding a kidney for a transplant is not easy. Just ask the people on the waiting list for a deceased donor kidney like me. Time is not on our side. Some wait for years; many die while waiting. However, there is another option: receiving a kidney from a living donor.

Asking my family, friends and supporters to consider donating a kidney to me is difficult, but it greatly improves my chances of getting a transplant. A living kidney donation typically lasts longer and has better function.

You might not know a lot about living donation - I know I didn’t before kidney disease affected my life. Understandably, some people are afraid about the surgery and what living with one kidney will mean for them. Here’s some basic information about kidney donation:

- You only need one kidney to live a healthy, long life.
- Most donor surgery is done laparoscopically, meaning through tiny incisions.
- The recuperation period is usually fairly quick, generally two weeks.
- The cost of your evaluation and surgery will be covered by my insurance. The hospital can give you extensive information on this.
GRAND CHIEF STEWART PHILLIP- APPEAL FOR A LIVING KIDNEY DONOR
June 3, 2020
Website: www.kidneyforGCSP.ca Email Inquiries: kidneyforGCSP@gmail.com

- You will have a separate team of healthcare professionals to evaluate you as a living donor. Their job is to help you understand the risks and benefits and look out for YOUR best interests.

BC Transplant oversees all aspects of organ donation and transplant across BC and manages the BC Organ Donor Registry. Visit the BC Transplant website http://www.transplant.bc.ca/health-info/organ-donation/living-donation for more information on becoming a living kidney donor. You can reach out directly to the Vancouver General Hospital Living Donor Program (Kidney) by calling 604.875.5182 or 1.855.875.5182, or emailing kidneydonornurse@vch.ca. You can learn more about living donation from this brochure on the Kidney Foundation website: https://kidney.ca/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?guid=a0a2f3b1-5200-4047-aa90-bfcfd585ed0.

Thank you for taking the time to read my story. However, I know living donation may not be right for everyone — but you can still help. Consider being an organ donor after death https://kidney.ca/Get-Involved/Be-an-Organ-Donor/Register-to-be-an-Organ-Donor/ Organ-Donor-Registries and also, help me by sharing my story with everyone you know. At the very least I want to bring awareness to kidney disease and living donation. I am hopeful my efforts will help me receive a kidney sooner and encourage others to consider helping the many people on the wait list. Please direct any further questions to kidneyforGCSP@gmail.com.

Lim’ Limpt (thank you)

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip