



MENDEZ NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF  
TRANSPLANTATION FOUNDATION

## Mendez National Institute of Transplantation Foundation Launches "Do You Know?" Kidney Awareness Campaign

**\*MARCH\* IS NATIONAL KIDNEY MONTH**

**\*APRIL\* IS NATIONAL DONATE LIFE MONTH & NATIONAL MINORITY HEALTH MONTH**

A staggering **1 in 7 people have kidney disease** - an estimated 37 million Americans - and most do not find out until their kidney disease is advanced. African Americans have a prevalence of chronic kidney disease that is **25% higher** than White Americans, and they are **10 times** more likely to develop hypertension-related kidney failure and almost **4 times** more likely to develop kidney failure.

Just in time for National Kidney Month, National Donate Life Month and National Minority Health Month, the Mendez National Institute of Transplantation Foundation (MNITF) is proud to announce the launch of its latest initiative, the **"Do You Know?"** Kidney Awareness Campaign. This campaign aims to educate, empower, and inspire individuals to take proactive steps toward kidney health and seeks to shed light on the importance of early detection, prevention, and treatment options. "Do You Know?" will feature a variety of activities designed to inform and inspire action through social media platforms, online resources, and multimedia content. MNITF will disseminate vital information about kidney disease prevention, early detection, and treatment options, reaching a wider audience and fostering meaningful conversations about kidney health.

"As a leading advocate for transplantation and organ donation, MNITF is committed to making a positive impact on kidney health outcomes. The *Linked by Love* series and "Do You Know?" campaign represents our dedication to raising awareness, empowering individuals, and saving lives through education and action," said Nicole Mendez, Executive Director of Mendez National Institute of Transplantation Foundation.

Through the award-winning series *Linked by Love* and "Get the Facts! Get Checked! Get Healthy!" PSA starring actress and singer Vanessa Williams, MNITF developed a digital series about kidney transplantation and living donation that targets the needs of Black patients and families facing end-stage renal disease (ESRD). *Linked by Love* presents transplant and living donation information by combining education and entertainment (edutainment) to create a fictional story incorporating drama and comedy. The project is unique because scientific research has been used to help create the main characters and storyline by addressing the common barriers preventing Black or African Americans from accessing and utilizing transplantation as a treatment option. *Linked by Love* also highlights living donor kidney chains to help patients, family members, and friends learn more about living donation. In addition, the series helps educate viewers about kidney disease, kidney failure, and prevention.

"*Linked by Love* is a beautiful story about the power of family, hope and paying it forward with a living donation. It was created to reach the African-American and Black community to help decrease the disparities of kidney disease and increase access to transplantation, however, everyone can benefit from watching to learn more about kidney disease prevention and transplantation," added Nicole Mendez.

"Do You Know?" kicks off March 1st and will continue throughout March and April with a series of initiatives aimed at promoting kidney health awareness and advocacy. For more information about the campaign, including upcoming events and resources, visit [LinkedbyLoveTV.org](http://LinkedbyLoveTV.org), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Youtube](#) and [Twitter](#).

The *Linked by Love* "Get the Facts! Get Checked! Get Healthy!" PSA is available for download at <https://tinyurl.com/2shj3n3j>

**About the Mendez National Institute of Transplantation Foundation (MNITF):**

MNITF is a public non-profit organization that adheres to its mission of advancing the science and practice of organ transplantation and end-stage organ disease therapies through research, education, and innovation. MNITF's commitment to education and outreach has resulted in successful, community patient education programs that target underserved populations to increase awareness and access to transplantation.

The award-winning web series, *Fixing Paco*, which was shot in both English and Spanish, is a groundbreaking 10-episode telenovela-style series created to provide vital information about kidney transplantation and maintenance to Latinos and those with end-stage renal disease (ESRD).

Similar to the award-winning *Fixing Paco* series, *Linked by Love* presents transplant and living donation information by combining education and entertainment (edutainment) to create a fictional story that incorporates drama and comedy. *Linked by Love* is unique because scientific research is being used to help create the main characters and storyline by addressing the common barriers that prevent Black or African Americans from accessing and utilizing transplantation as a treatment option.

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