

# *Improving care for patients with renal insufficiency*

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**Hemodialysis Service in Cuba**

by María Josefina Arce

By the first semester of this year, new hemodialysis services are expected to be ready and are currently being set up in Cuba, in order to improve care for patients with renal insufficiency, an ailment that is growing in the Cuban territory.

A loan from the French Development Agency has made it possible for these nine facilities to be added to those already existing throughout the archipelago.

The necessary equipment, which includes between 10 and 15 artificial kidneys each, and water treatment plants, is already in place in the different Cuban provinces where they are being built.

The expansion of this service will bring economy, wellbeing and quality of life for patients and families by bringing it closer to those who need it, who in many cases have to travel to the provincial capitals.

In the Cuban health system, attention to renal failure, dialysis and transplants occupies a primordial place. This ailment is associated with obesity, smoking, diabetes mellitus, arterial hypertension and cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases.

Hence, the family doctor's offices are essential, helping to promote health, in search of healthier living habits, as well as prevention, patient screening, care and evolution.

This important work is supported by 56 nephrology services, nine transplant centers and immunological studies at the level of the most developed countries.

Since the beginning of kidney transplants in Cuba in 1970, more than 6,000 Cubans have benefited from this procedure, which is performed free of charge here, despite the limitations imposed by the U.S. blockade, which causes serious damage in the area of health.

This intervention is highly expensive. According to specialists, in other countries it can cost tens of thousands of dollars.

The WHO, the World Health Organization, has recognized Cuba's progress in this specialty, as a result of primary care and integrated care.

In the most complex moments for the country, these services have continued to be guaranteed to renal patients, an effort in which the Cuban biopharmaceutical industry also plays an important role by obtaining diagnostics and medicines necessary for the treatment of the disease.

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