

## Free screenings help prevent kidney disease

BY BECKY MALKOVICH, THE SOUTHERN

CARTERVILLE - The battle against kidney disease got a boost Saturday as the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois' KidneyMobile® visited the campus of John A. Logan College to save the day for and, perhaps, the lives of residents who participated in the mobile's free prevention and education program.

The kidney foundation provided free screenings for almost 175 Southern Illinoisans during Saturday's Diabetes Awareness and Prevention Day sponsored by Southern Illinois Healthcare.

Participants were given four tests, including urinalysis, body mass index, blood pressure and blood sugar, and a blood draw, said Robert Hearn of the foundation.

"A lot of people don't know they have high blood pressure or diabetes, the enemies of the kidney," he said. "If left untreated, they will eventually destroy the kidney, no doubt about it."

The KidneyMobile travels throughout the state to offer the free screenings valued at more than \$200.

Dr. Kevin Chen, a Southern Illinois nephrologist, said screenings are key to fighting kidney disease.

"Prevention and early detection of diseases such as high blood pressure and diabetes can help prevent kidney disease or slow its progress," Chen said.

Richard L. Fitzgerrell of Energy attended the event for that very reason. A cancer survivor, Fitzgerrell also has diabetes that he is able to control by diet and exercise.

"I came today to make sure things don't get worse," he said. "And I want to stay educated on the latest advances."

A number of doctors were featured speakers at the event, offering tips on managing diabetes, including foot care, insulin pumping and exercise, said Amy Stout, patient education coordinator at Herrin Hospital. Physicians were also available for those whose screenings discovered problems such as high blood pressure, she said.

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DETAILS

Kamilah Banks of Chicago tests a urine sample for protein during free kidney disease screenings at John A. Logan College. (CLAUDETTE ROULO / THE SOUTHERN)



**High blood pressure and diabetes are both enemies of the kidney.** While high blood pressure typically has no signs or symptoms, diabetes could be the cause for any of the following symptoms: extreme thirst or hunger; chronic fatigue; blurred vision; frequent urination; unintended weight loss; dry, itchy skin; and loss of sensation or tingling in feet.

