

Doctors set up free dialysis service

KARISHMA GANPATH

A GROUP of Durban medical practitioners has given a lifeline to thousands of cash-strapped kidney sufferers by offering a free or subsidised renal dialysis service.

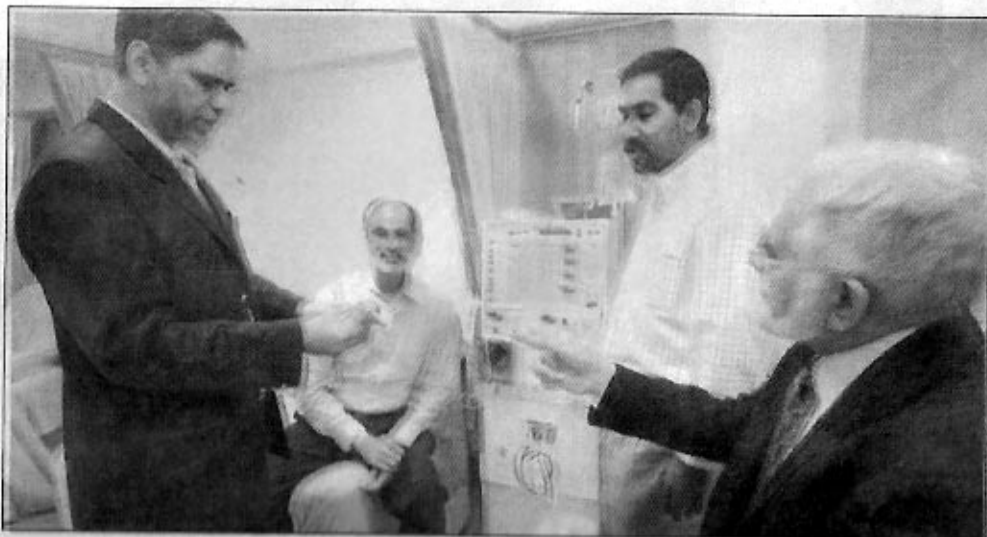
The project, believed to be the first of its kind in the province, will be launched tomorrow at Nu-Shifa Hospital.

It is being co-ordinated by Dr Solly Suleman and Dr Mahomed Solwa of the Islamic Medical Association, Dr Ebrahim Essop Vawda of the Iqraa Trust of South Africa, Dr Rennie Padavattan of KwaZulu Dialysis and the Nu-Shifa Hospital management.

Padavattan said a single session of renal dialysis cost about R1000, depending on a patient's needs. Some may require up to three treatments a week, so that could easily accumulate to R12 000 a month.

"There are very few patients who can afford a kidney transplant. Others are forced to limit their weekly hospital visits after exhausting their medical aid.

"Those who cannot meet the state hospitals' criteria are left with no option but to live with the illness until their body can no longer cope



DURBAN doctors Mahomed Solwa, Solly Suleman, Rennie Padavattan and Ebrahim Essop Vawda discuss the delicate procedure of renal dialysis with the use of an imitation kidney at the community centre at Nu-Shifa Hospital in Overport

Picture: SHERELEE CLARKE

with increased toxicity levels in the bloodstream, leading to multiple organ failure and eventually death," said Padavattan.

Suleman said thousands of people around the province who suffered from kidney failure as a result of hypertension, diabetes and other related factors were burdened with escalating medical bills.

"This strategic partnership will enable the group to provide essential treatment to the public at a subsidised

rate or for free, depending on their income," said Suleman.

Vawda, the chief financial officer of the Iqraa Trust, has pledged R600 000 to help start and sustain the project over three years.

"We hope the initiative will see greater support from the private and corporate sectors over the next year, so it will become a long-term service to the community."

Suleman said the campaign was a community project that required huge resources, financial aid and

expertise.

"We are appealing to members of the private and corporate sectors to assist us in helping others."

Solwa said the campaign was also a drive to educate the public about the causes, effects and treatment of diabetes and hypertension, the main causes of renal failure.

For details or to support the campaign call the Islamic Medical Association at 031 207 2250.

karishma.ganpath@inl.co.za