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# Custom RV lets dialysis patients hit the road

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People with kidney problems are often so tied down by dialysis treatments that they must set aside any plans for travel — but some creative Albertans invented a way around the problem.

The brainstorm came from Nancy Verdin, who lives in Red Deer. Verdin said that nine years ago, her kidneys failed.

Like most people with the problem, she began going to a hospital three times a week for dialysis. The process takes blood out of the body and filters it through a machine, then returns it.

Four years ago, she switched to doing home dialysis six days a week and began to feel like her old self again.

But Verdin still found herself unable to travel like she had in the past, including frequent trips to attend music camps where she would play her oboe.

"I've got all this energy, I've got this concentration and focus to do what I did before and yet I'm stuck at home," Verdin said. "It's frustrating to the point where part of you just wants to throw in the towel and say 'Just forget it.'"

Instead of giving up, Verdin and a friend formed the Traveling Dialysis RV Association. They approached a Red Deer company, Travelaire, and convinced it to design and build a \$20,000 trailer for free.

The trailer includes a home dialysis unit that weighs more than 100 kilograms and is about the size of refrigerator.

The dialysis unit and filtration system, valued together at \$45,000, were donated by manufacturers.

The trailer, which may be pulled by a truck or SUV, is available to be rented between May and August.

"If it works well, we're hoping that it can grow," said Barry Batement of Travelaire, saying he would like to see similar trailers throughout Canada and even North America.

"This will be something that will catch on and just be a real public service."

Verdin hopes the trailer will improve the quality of life for more than two dozen people who participate in the Northern Alberta Renal Program out of the University of Alberta.

Verdin said she plans to book the trailer in August to take her parents to Winnipeg to visit family and friends. She also hopes to attend a music camp at the International Peace Gardens, which lie along the Manitoba-North Dakota border.