



Network 17 Patient Newsletter

February 2019

WHO IS HSAG: ESRD NETWORK 17?

Health Services Advisory Group (HSAG) End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Network 17 contracts with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to bring the ESRD Program to American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, the Mariana Islands, and Northern California. The Network works with patients, dialysis facilities, and transplant providers to promote the highest quality care through effective coordination of services and resources for the renal community. We:

- Are nurses, social workers, and data specialists.
- Have many years of experience working with people who have ESRD.
- Promote patient-centered care.
- Focus on helping to improve patient care.
- Will work with you to resolve grievances about your care.
- **Are here for you!**

WHERE CAN YOU GET CURRENT INFORMATION ABOUT TREATING KIDNEY DISEASE?

The American Association of
Kidney Patients

www.aakp.org

Medical Education Institute

www.kidneyschool.org

National Kidney Foundation



To file a grievance, please contact
HSAG: ESRD Network 17:

800.232.3373

info@nw17.esrd.net

533 Airport Road, Ste. 400
Burlingame, CA 94010

www.HSAG.com/ESRDNetwork17

Share Your Feedback!

Let us know how we're doing:

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/
NW17PatientNews](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NW17PatientNews)

YOUR "WELCOME TO MEDICARE" PREVENTIVE VISIT

Did you know that when you sign up for Medicare Part B you are entitled to a free first visit with your doctor? This visit is covered by Medicare; but it must be scheduled within the first 12 months of signing up for Part B. Read below to see what you can expect at your first visit. Make note of what to bring to make the most out of your time with the doctor.

What to Expect—Your doctor will:

- Assess and record yours and your family's medical history. Make sure to tell the doctor about any current health conditions and the prescriptions you take.
- Check your blood pressure, vision, weight, and height. This is to get a baseline for your care.
- Make sure you're up-to-date with preventive screenings and services. Such services may include cancer screenings and shots.
- Order further tests, if you need them.
- Give you a plan or checklist for free screenings and preventive services that you will need.

What to Bring—It is important that you bring:

- Any medical records, including immunization records. Even if your current doctor does the visit, bring as much information as you can. This will help to ensure nothing is overlooked.
- Family health history. Try to learn as much as you can about your family's health history before your visit. Knowing your family's health history will help you and your doctor better know what to watch for in the future. It will also help to determine what screenings you should get.
- Prescription drugs. Bring a list of all drugs you take. That includes prescription, over-the-counter, vitamins, and supplements. Be ready to tell the doctor how often you take them and why. If you don't want to make a list, just grab all of the bottles and bring them with you.

Source: https://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNProducts/Downloads/MPS_QRI_IPPE001a.pdf

PATIENT VOICE



2019 brings new Patient Advisory Committee (PAC) members, as well as those who have served the ESRD Network 17 Patient community for several years.

This is Derek Forfang, your PAC Chair. 2019 also brings new projects to improve patient care and improve our quality of life. This year we have a project with the goal of reducing long-term catheters use by two percent. Catheters are a major cause of life-threatening infections for dialysis patients.

We are also continuing to focus on increasing the transplant waitlist, so patients can improve their quality of life and get a chance to increase their life span. Being a dialysis patient for 12 years and now a transplant patient, I can't say enough about how my life has been changed for the better by the gift of a transplant.

We are also working to increase the number of patients who do their treatments at home. I know many patients who do home dialysis and say it was the best decision they ever made. So, check it out!

Lastly we want people with ESRD to have the chance to get employed. We are looking to remove the barriers we face as ESRD patients to getting jobs. Even a part-time job can give us extra money and get us back to living a fuller life.

We are excited about getting started! I hope 2019 brings you happiness and wellbeing.

Your 2019 Network 17 PAC Chair, Dereck, CA

ESRD QUALITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM (QIP) Positive Results for Patients

The federal government wants kidney patients to get the best care possible. To make sure that happens, rules were passed to create the ESRD QIP. Managed by CMS, the QIP is important because it lets CMS pay your facility based on the *quality*, not the *quantity* of care it provides. Under the Program, facilities are expected to deliver the best quality of care possible. If they don't, they may receive a payment reduction from CMS. This is determined using data taken from all ESRD patient records nationwide. *Patients are never individually identified or financially impacted by the ESRD QIP.*

Medicare wants you to know your facility's QIP score. Your dialysis facility must post its QIP certificate in a place that is easy for all patients to see. Look around your facility for a document that describes how it performed on the ESRD QIP. You can use that information to decide if you want to stay with your facility or find another one. ESRD QIP certificates are updated every year. This lets you see how much your facility's scores have improved—or not. Find your facility's certificate. Talk to the facility manager if you have questions, comments, or concerns about the scores you see.

Do you want to know how your facility scored compared to others? Check out Dialysis Facility Compare, a free CMS website, at www.medicare.gov/dialysisfacilitycompare.

ESRD QIP:

Four Ways You Can Help

Get Involved in the Management of Your Health

Take charge of your health. Not sure how? Need help? Your doctor, nurse, dietitian, or social worker can help you to successfully manage your own health. Want to know how other patients do it? Your nurse or social worker can connect you with other dialysis patients who will share their methods for managing their health and making the best of living with chronic illness and dialysis. These patients will tell you about their own experiences and support your efforts.

Ask Questions When You Don't Understand

Your doctor and care team are there to help you. Ask them questions until you are sure you understand. Whether it is treatment-, medication-, or facility-related, you have a right to know. If you still don't understand, keep asking until you do.

Tell Your Care Team When You Are Having Trouble

This is especially true in regard to your treatment plan. If something doesn't work because of your finances or lifestyle, your care team can help you come up with different options. ***Don't be afraid to speak up.*** Staying quiet could be harmful to your health. Remember, if your care team doesn't know you're having problems, they won't know to help you.

Take Every Opportunity to Provide Feedback

If you are asked to answer some questions about your dialysis facility or the care you receive, please take the time to do so. Never miss an opportunity to let your facility know how you feel. Your feedback helps your facility to make any needed improvements.

If you have questions about how to voice a concern or grievance, check out this helpful tool created BY patients FOR patients:

The Dialysis Patient Grievance Toolkit

To file a grievance, contact Network 17 at **1.800.232.3373**.



533 Airport Blvd.
Suite 400
Burlingame, CA 94010



T: 800.232.3773
E: info@nw17.esrd.net



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