



Tips for Partnering with Local Vocational Rehabilitation Offices

Contact and build a relationship with VR Counselors. To find your local office, visit your state Department / Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and view the “VR Office Directory.” You may search for offices by County or Area.

Provide information to VR Counselors on the ESRD population, and their ability to work:

- Hemodialysis (HD) is a medical procedure performed usually three times per week to remove harmful toxins in the blood when a person’s kidneys have failed. Thus, kidney failure is treatable.
- Dialysis treatments can be performed at home or scheduled in a center to avoid interfering with work schedules.
- Peritoneal dialysis (PD) is a medical procedure performed several times daily to remove harmful toxins in the blood when a person’s kidneys have failed. PD is usually done at night, but PD can be done by the patient in any clean, private environment – even at work; PD is compatible with the demands and schedule requirements of a job.
- It is a myth that once a person starts dialysis he/she cannot work. Most patients will be restriction-free, and with the exception of heavy physical labor, capable of performing the specific job tasks they did before starting dialysis.
- Dialysis patients who continue to work experience economic stability, personal satisfaction, and an enhanced sense of well being.

Hold a face-to-face meeting with your local VR Unit Counselors, either in their office or at the dialysis facility. Some dialysis facilities have held “VR Days” – inviting local VR Area Supervisors and Work Incentive Coordinators to visit with patients at the facility and answer questions about work and Social Security benefits.

Provide education on VR to your facility staff.

Post VR materials in public areas of the facility.

Educate ESRD patients on the VR referral process

- Referral
- Orientation and receipt of the VR Handbook of Services
- The VR Handbook of Services and can be found on line at your state VR website
- Application
- Assignment to a Counselor
- Determination of eligibility
- Placement on a waiting list – priorities are based on category of status and date of application
- Services are provided via a written plan

Ask patients to keep you informed of their VR activities, barriers, progress, and need for help (e.g. communication with counselors, coordination of care).