

ESRD Background and Network Introduction



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Welcome to the Network!

- If you are new to dialysis, this material will probably be information that you have not heard before. You are starting on a very rewarding and exciting career path – one that can positively impact many patients.
- If this is a review, welcome back! We hope that this will provide you with even more key information.

Participation in the Network

- If the dialysis center receives Medicare reimbursement for services (and virtually all dialysis units do), the unit is automatically a part of the Network program.
- The unit is required by the Medicare ESRD Conditions for Coverage to work with the Network toward meeting goals.

Heartland Kidney Network

- A not-for profit organization
- Contracts with Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)
- Governed by a Medical Review Board and Board of Directors



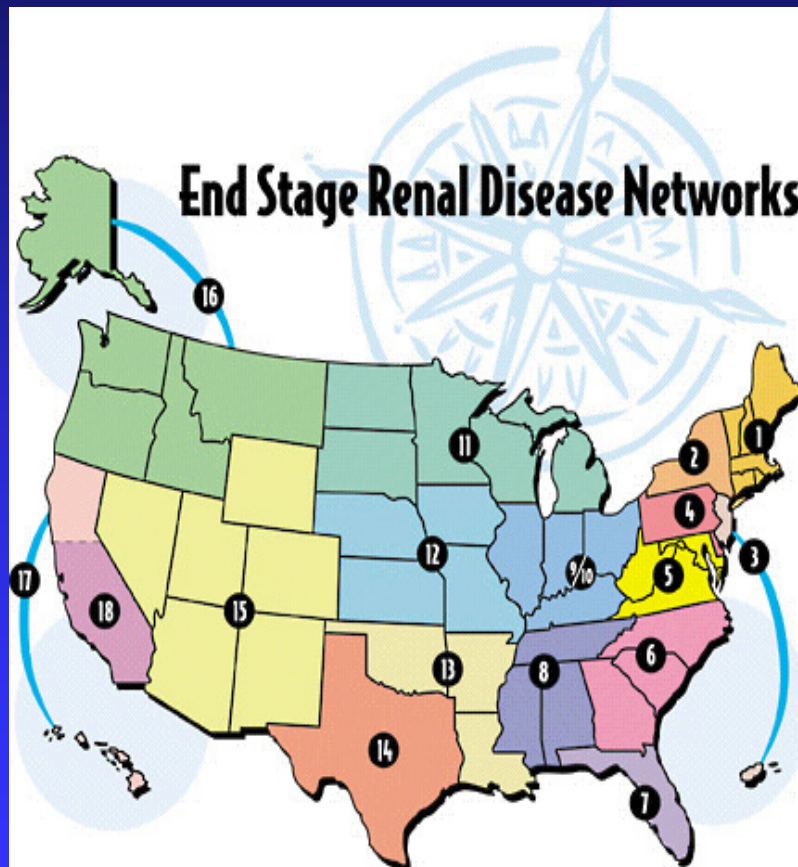
The Establishment of ESRD Networks

The End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Program was established in 1972 pursuant to the provisions of Section 2991, Public Law 92_603. This legislation extended Medicare coverage to virtually all individuals with ESRD who require dialysis or transplantation to sustain life.

The Establishment of ESRD Networks cont.

This legislation and subsequent regulations also established health and safety standards applicable to dialysis and transplant centers and required the establishment of ESRD Network Coordinating Councils. Networks serve as liaisons between the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and the providers of ESRD services.

ESRD Networks Nationwide



- The United States is divided into 18 ESRD Networks.

- Map copied from the Forum of Networks website

Each Network is required by federal contract to be active in the areas of:

- Data Collection
- Patient Satisfaction
- Quality Improvement
- Clearinghouse

Network Authority

Involvement of ESRD Networks in patient grievance activities is mandated by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 (OBRA)(P.L. 99-509). This law modified Section 1881c of the Social Security Act directing ESRD Network organizations to “implement a procedure for evaluating and resolving patient grievances.” Networks are also directed to “encourage, consistent with sound medical practice, the use of those treatment therapies most compatible with the successful rehabilitation of the patient;” and “develop criteria and standards relating to the quality and appropriateness of patient care...and to report to the Secretary the facilities and providers that do not provide appropriate care.” According to the nature of the complaint, the Network investigates the allegations by requesting information from the facility.

Quality Improvement

- Clinical Performance Measures/lab data collection activities (Annual)
- Quality Improvement Projects
- USRDS (United States Renal Data System) collaborations
- CDC (Center for Disease Control) collaborations

The Network & State Survey Agencies

- The Network and State Survey Agencies have a cooperative relationship and frequently share information relating to patient grievance activity, involuntary patient discharge, and/or quality of care issues.

Educational Resources

- Heartland Kidney Network provides educational programs for dialysis and transplant providers.
- As they become available, ESRD educational materials are forwarded to dialysis facilities.
- Every effort is made to assist facilities in obtaining resource materials for special needs.

Patient Grievances

- The Network has a grievance procedure for patients who have issues that they want investigated.
- The Network encourages patients to use the dialysis facility grievance procedure before going through the Network investigation.

Facility Grievance Procedure

- Every dialysis and transplant facility is to have an internal patient grievance procedure.
- Patients should be educated about how to utilize the facility grievance mechanism.
- Most issues can be handled at the facility level.

Patient Satisfaction



- One of the ESRD program goals is promotion of vocational rehabilitation to help patients return to the workplace, enjoy activities, and live a fulfilling life.

Grievance Mediation

- The Network is charged with the authority to mediate patient grievances. Every effort is made to investigate each situation fairly and thoroughly.



The Patient Grievance Committee

- The committee is made up of practicing Nephrology professionals and dialysis patients serving on the Medical Review Board of the Network
- All identifiers are removed from the documents before the committee reviews them.



The Board of Directors & Medical Review Boards

- If quality of care allegations against a facility are serious and substantiated, the Network boards may refer the case to CMS for possible Sanctions (loss of Medicare funding) or Alternative Sanctions (a \$ penalty).
- Facilities consistently performing clinically at substandard levels are also at risk of Sanctions or Alternative Sanctions .

Clearinghouse Activities

- CMS/Medicare resource materials are forwarded to the facilities and/or patients.
- SMR(standardized mortality rate) data distributed annually

We are Here For You



- Do not hesitate to contact the Network if we can assist you!

If you visit Kansas City, MO you can come by the office and see us!

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