COVID-19

An End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD)
National Coordinating Center (NCC)
Patient Education Webinar Event

February 2, 2021
Agenda

• What is this call about?

• Today’s speakers
  ▪ Allison Boutwell, MSW, LCSW
    ‒ Patient Services Manager
    ‒ The Florida ESRD Network 7
    ‒ Topic: Understanding the Role of Network Patient Services During COVID-19
  ▪ Derek Forfang
    ‒ Transplant recipient
    ‒ Kidney Patient Advisory Council (KPAC) co-chair

• Questions and answers (Q&As) from chat and Q&A panels
Online Patient and Family Member Resources

• View resources providing information about:
  ▪ What to expect as a newly diagnosed patient.
  ▪ Understanding the grievance process.
  ▪ Choosing transplantation.
  ▪ Choosing home dialysis.
  ▪ Infection prevention.
  ▪ Emergency planning.
  ▪ Caregiving.

• Get links to trustworthy organizations.

• Visit [www.esrdncc.org/patient](http://www.esrdncc.org/patient).

Source: ESRD NCC
What Is This Call About?

• Hear from experts who share tips for coping in a COVID-19 environment.
• Provide real-world experiences for others to put into use.
• Engage in bi-weekly calls on varying topics.
Allison Boutwell, MSW, LSW

Patient Services Manager
The Florida ESRD Network
Role of ESRD Network 7

The Florida ESRD Network 7 provides nearly 500 dialysis providers and more than 33,000 dialysis patients across its Network service area with:

- quality improvement.
- data management.
- grievance investigation.
- technical assistance.
- patient and professional education services.

• Our goal is to efficiently and effectively increase the quality of care and quality of life for patients with kidney disease.
Role of Patient Services Managers

Patient Services Managers (PSMs) are responsible for:

• Resolving patient and/or facility complaints or grievances.
• Conducting educational training on managing difficult patients.
• Mediation.
• Conflict resolution.

Most are licensed clinical social workers with years of direct dialysis and transplant experience.
COVID-19: Role of the ESRD Network

- Educate facilities on COVID-19 guidance and any changes to it.
- Educate patients and dialysis facility staff on COVID-19 prevention using CDC resources.
- Help dialysis facilities identify the source of COVID case increases and provide resources to decrease them.
- Advocate for patient rights and maintain outpatient access to care.

CDC = The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Patient and Staff Education

The Network sends weekly emails providing a variety of COVID-19 education, such as:

- **NCC COVID-19 Patient and Provider Webinars**
- **Kidney Community Emergency Response (KCER) COVID-19 Resource Center**
- **CMS COVID-19 Focused Infection Control Survey Tool**
- **CMS COVID-19 Provider Toolkit**
- **Health Resource & Services Administration (HRSA) Telehealth Programs**
CDC Resources and Guidance

The Network sends weekly emails to all facilities with CDC resources, including:

- COVIDView Weekly Summary
- COVID-19 Vaccination Toolkits
- How to Select, Wear, and Clean Your Masks
- Outpatient Dialysis Facility Preparedness Assessment Tool

Source: CDC
ESRD Networks' Technical Assistance Calls

Examples of questions include:

• How are the COVID-19 patients being identified?
• What screening processes is the facility using for all patients?
• How many are nursing home patients?
  ▪ Has the facility been in contact with the nursing home?
  ▪ Is there additional screening for nursing home patients?
• What actions were taken by the facility?
  ▪ Were any infection control audits performed?
• What does the facility think is working best to control the spread?
• What barriers are the facility experiencing?
Advocate for Patient Rights and Maintain Outpatient Access to Care

Patients can call their ESRD Network with any grievances they may have related to COVID-19. Some examples of grievances are:

• Communication issues—Staff not properly communicating why patients are considered as PUI and what the next steps are.

• Professionalism—Staff treated a patient differently after he/she was diagnosed with COVID-19.

• Screening—Facility was not properly screening patients/staff when entering the facility.

• Sharing of information—Patients were not told if there was a COVID-19 positive patient or staff member with whom they were in close contact with.

• Masks—Patients did not want to wear a mask or wanted to wear their own mask during dialysis.

PUI = Patient Under Investigation
Dialysis Facility COVID-19 Best Practices

• Screen all patients and staff for COVID-19 upon entry into the facility, including:
  ▪ Temperature checks
  ▪ Questions regarding symptoms and exposure

• Ensure that all patients are wearing a mask.
  ▪ Many companies require patients to wear a new surgical mask during each treatment.

• Maintain social distancing protocols for patients and visitors in the waiting room.

• Ensure that CDC, local, and state guidelines are followed for infection control:
  ▪ Properly sanitizing surfaces
  ▪ Proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
COVID-19 Patient Cohorts

Most dialysis organizations have designated facilities or shifts for the following groups of patients to ensure that they continue to receive dialysis treatments:

• PUI-Symptomatic:
  ▪ Patients displaying symptoms of COVID-19 who are awaiting test results

• PUI-Asymptomatic:
  ▪ Patients who have been in close contact with COVID-19 and are awaiting test results

• COVID-19 Positive-Symptomatic

• COVID-19 Positive-Asymptomatic
Dialysis Facility Role

If patients test positive for COVID-19 or are deemed PUI, dialysis staff should work with patients to explain their options and what to expect when it comes to cohort facilities or shifts. This includes:

- Where is the cohort facility?
- When is their chair time?
- Are there any transportation barriers?
- What criteria must be met before patients can return to their home clinic?
- What happens if patients continue to test positive for a long time, but are no longer considered infectious?
- Will the home clinic keep patients’ time slots available for them until they return?
Case Example 1

A patient contacted the Network because he believed that he was being denied dialysis unfairly. The hospital where he was receiving treatment had explained that he was considered a PUI for COVID-19 due to presenting symptoms of the virus. However, he felt that these symptoms are also very common side effects of dialysis: shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle pain, cough, headache, etc. He was told that he could not return to his home dialysis facility until receiving a negative COVID-19 test.
Case Example 1 (cont.)

Patient services actions:

• Opened a grievance with the patient’s permission and immediately contacted the dialysis facility. Received the following clarification:
  ▪ Staff confirmed that per facility policy the patient cannot return to their facility until receiving a negative COVID-19 test because they considered the patient a PUI.
  ▪ Facility offered treatments at their PUI cohort facility. However, that facility was 45 minutes from the patient’s home.

• Reached out to other dialysis companies to find out where their cohort facilities were located.

• Advocated for a transient treatment at a nearby cohort facility—only 10 minutes from the patient’s home.

• Advocated for the patient also to receive a COVID-19 test at the cohort facility.
Case Example 1 (cont.)

Barriers:

• The cohort facility for this company was 45 minutes away from the patient’s home.
• The transportation company that the patient used for dialysis refused to transport anyone under investigation for COVID-19.
• The patient did not have access to his own transportation, including transportation to have a COVID-19 test.
Case Example 1 (cont.)

Outcome

• The patient:
  ▪ Only had to treat on a PUI shift at the cohort facility for 1 treatment.
  ▪ Was able to arrange transportation with a friend.
  ▪ Tested negative for COVID-19 and was able to return to his home facility.
Case Example 2

• A patient called the Network with concerns about the facility’s COVID-19 screening process.
• This patient was exposed to a COVID+ family member—making the patient a PUI.
• This patient’s home facility had a PUI shift; however, the patient was concerned about attending because of changes in the screening process:
  ▪ At the beginning of the pandemic, facility staff met patients at the lobby door for screening and to provide masks.
  ▪ Recently the facility was allowing patients to enter the lobby and then screening them before they entered the treatment floor. This led to some patients sitting in the lobby without masks if they did not bring masks from home.
Case Example 2 (cont.)

Patient services actions:

• Opened a grievance with the patient’s permission and immediately contacted the dialysis facility.

• Reviewed the dialysis facility’s policy on screening for COVID-19.
  ▪ Confirmed that the facility was continuing to follow its screening policy, which allowed for screening on the treatment floor. However, the facility was not following its policy regarding masking and social distancing in the lobby.

• Advocated for the facility to implement best practices: both screening and providing masks immediately when patients arrive to the lobby.
Case Example 2—Continued

Barriers:

• Staffing: Staffing shortages led to difficulties having a staff member at the front door when patients arrived.

• PPE: The facility tried leaving a box of masks for the patients at the front door. However, those boxes were being stolen, leading to a PPE shortage.
Case Example 2—Continued

Outcome:

• The facility implemented best practices, including screening patients at the lobby door and handing out masks.
• The manager agreed to complete audits of the screening process.
• The patient returned to her home facility on the PUI shift and then, after testing negative for COVID-19, went back to her regular treatment shift.
ESRD NCC Website

Visit the ESRD NCC website for your ESRD Network’s information and resources in your state or region: www.esrdncc.org.
Derek Forfang
Transplant recipient
Kidney Patient Advisory Council (KPAC) co-chair
“You should never second guess the power of one voice.”

—Anonymous
Thank You

Derek Forfang
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Visit www.esrdnetworks.org
Select Toolkits
Let Us Hear From You

• Q&As from chat and Q&A panels
Quality Assessment & Performance Meetings

• A new tool to help you prepare for Quality Assessment & Performance (QAPI) Meetings
• Learn what to expect and how to prepare for:
  ▪ Before the meeting.
  ▪ During the meeting.
  ▪ After the meeting.
• Visit [www.esrdncc.org/patients](http://www.esrdncc.org/patients)
  ▪ Select “For New Dialysis Patients.”
  ▪ QAPI Meeting Resource

Source: ESRD NCC
Where to Find Credible Information

About the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19)

During this pandemic, it’s especially important for everyone to take actions to keep themselves, and others, safe. To do this, let’s pause and think through how and where you can find credible, or trustworthy, information—especially as someone with kidney disease.

In stressful times, you may often turn to family and friends for support. Family and friends are great for:

✓ Provide or receive emotional support.
✓ Connect with by phone call, video chat, or social media.

But your family and friends might not have the most up-to-date information on COVID-19 or the best actions to take right now, especially if you are on dialysis or have a kidney transplant. For this kind of information, you should turn to experts for credible information.

So, where can you find credible COVID-19 information? Start with these sites.

For general updates (e.g., handwashing and distancing, stay-at-home orders, use of masks) on COVID-19:

✓ The U.S. Coronavirus Emergency Response Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
✓ Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)
✓ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS)
✓ World Health Organization (WHO)

For kidney disease-related updates on COVID-19:

✓ The ESRD National Coordinating Center (ESRD) website, you can learn about kidney-related COVID-19 health information and where to locate webinars from health experts and patient advocates.
✓ Go to the Kidney Community Emergency Resource Center (KREC) website for the most up-to-date resource on COVID-19 from government, patient, and health care organizations.
✓ View the ESRF Network for a directory of ESRD Network Organizations nationwide to find kidney disease or dialysis help in your area.
✓ Check out the American Association of Kidney Patients, Kidney Disease and COVID-19 to see webinars, frequently asked questions, and health alerts about kidney disease and COVID-19.
✓ Look for Physicians Patient Canton, COVID-19 Resources for Dialysis Patients, read about how dialysis centers are working to keep patients safe and prevent COVID-19 from spreading.
✓ The National Kidney Foundation (NKF) COVID-19 provides information to help kidney patients manage their health during COVID-19 and ideas for kidney-friendly living and coping strategies.
✓ Turn to the Social Support Network (SSN) for tips on how kidney patients can stay physically and emotionally healthy.

Click on “For Patients.”

Source: ESRD NCC
The Kidney Hub

• The Kidney Hub – Mobile-friendly web tool created with patients, for patients
• Links to new videos and helpful resources added
  ▪ Newly added diet and nutrition section
• Let us know what you think.
  ▪ Email us at NCCinfo@hsag.com.
• Visit www.TheKidneyHub.org today!

Source: ESRD NCC
Our Next COVID-19 Webinar Events

• Save the dates for our next events.
  ▪ Provider-focused events: February 10 at 3 p.m. ET
  ▪ Patient-focused event: February 16 at 4 p.m. ET

Visit [www.kidneyCOVIDinfocenter.com](http://www.kidneyCOVIDinfocenter.com) for information and to register.

Source: ESRD NCC
Thank You!

NCCinfo@hsag.com
844.472.4250
813.865.3545
www.esrdncc.org

Additional COVID-19 resources for patients and providers:

wwwthekidneyhub.org/covid19/
www.kidneyCOVIDinfocenter.com

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