COVID-19

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

December 30, 2020

COVID-19 = Coronavirus Disease 2019
Agenda

• What is this call about?
• Today’s speakers:
  ▪ Sini Tharu, LSW, Fresenius Medical Care, Bolingbrook Dialysis, Illinois
  ▪ John Valencia, Transplant Strategic Outreach Consultant, Rush University Medical Center, Chicago, Illinois
• Topic: The Importance of Kidney Transplant and the Referral Process During COVID-19
• Questions and answers (Q&As) from chat and Q&A panels
What Is This Call About?

• Hear from stakeholders and peers in the ESRD community who are adapting to COVID-19.
• Share examples and provide real-world strategies for facilities to use.
• Engage in bi-monthly calls on varying topics.
The Importance of Kidney Transplant and the Referral Process During COVID-19

Sini Tharu, LSW
Fresenius Kidney Care, Bolingbrook Dialysis, Illinois
Objectives

1. Identifying patient concerns and fears related to kidney transplant during a pandemic.
2. Understanding the benefits of having patients get on a transplant waitlist during COVID-19.
3. Describing the impact COVID-19 has had on the transplant referral process.
4. Describing how a transplant center educates dialysis patients during a pandemic.

1. Educate potential candidates within first 120 days of starting dialysis; minimum of annually thereafter.
2. Document education was provided in electronic medical record.
3. Track transplant process within the dialysis clinic.
4. Keep Attending Physician & Care Team apprised of patients’ transplant status (e.g., monthly QAI reports).
5. Address problems that cause delays in transplant evaluation.

Tx = treatment; QAI = Quality Assurance & Improvement
• Communicate with the transplant center regarding transplant status at least annually, and when there is a change in health status.

• Monitor the healthcare and mental status of patients on the transplant waitlist.

• Ensure communication between the patient and transplant center is in place to enhance continuity of care.
The patient should be educated on the following topics:

- Kidney transplant as a modality.
- Potential benefits of transplantation.
- Patient and family responsibilities and self-management pre-transplant and post-transplant, including patient adherence to medication regimens, clinic visits, and communication of problems to the transplant team.
Patient Education Continued

- Financial and insurance information.
- Compliance to treatment plan discussed.
- In-person Lobby Day Education provided by transplant centers.
Post- COVID-19 Education and Referral

- Patient Education and documentation on kidney transplant remain the same.
- Fresenius dialysis facilities are not able to conduct Lobby Day education in person.
- Virtual Lobby Day education being conducted.
Identifying Patient Concerns and Fears Related to Pursuing Kidney Transplant During a Pandemic

• There are fears and concerns related to initiating transplant referrals, following-up with appointments, and work-up.

• Being afraid of being exposed to those who are COVID-19 positive.

• Patients have expressed angst with contracting the virus.
• Social Workers encourage transplant as being the preferred option to maintain optimal quality of life and superior health outcomes.

• Education provided on the survival (life expectancy) is better in those who receive kidney transplant versus those who are on dialysis.

• The benefits of not coming to the dialysis center and the hours spent on dialysis treatment is discussed with patients.
• 24 patients have shown interest in pursuing kidney transplant.

• Initiation started by wanting list of transplant centers, making phone calls, completing application, and downloading QR Code.

• We have several patients who are listed for kidney transplant and those in the process of getting listed for transplant.

• We had 3 patients who received kidney transplant during the pandemic.
Patient Scenario #1

• Mr. A is a 72 y/o Hispanic male diagnosed with ESRD, secondary to diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with diabetic nephropathy.

• Patient reported that he tried to get listed for kidney transplant previously but was rejected due to his age and health conditions.

• Social worker provided encouragement to pursue kidney transplant again. The list of transplant centers was given, but he wanted to pursue transplant at Rush University. Patient was concerned to pursue transplant due to his age, especially during COVID-19.
Do You Think Patient Initiated the Kidney Transplant Due to COVID-19?
Yes!
OUTCOME:

• Patient decided to pursue getting listed for kidney transplant despite his concerns with his age and his worries surrounding the virus.

• Patient was not comfortable using the QR code and spoke to the transplant coordinator over the telephone. The transplant coordinator at Rush University faxed over the paper application.

• The application was completed and faxed. Patient currently has an appointment coming up towards the end of the month.
Patient Scenario #2:

• Mr. J is a 53 y/o Caucasian male diagnosed with hypertensive chronic kidney disease (CKD) with ESRD.

• Patient wanted to initiate referral at Rush University. However, Rush University was not in-network with his insurance. Patient and social worker contacted his insurance and learned that another transplant center was in his network.

• Patient was hesitant to follow-up with initiating the referral process due to the pandemic. Patient verbalized that he witnessed one of his close family members who was COVID-19 positive and saw the effects of the virus.

• Social worker provided encouragement and explained the safety measures that transplant centers have in place.
Do You Think That the Patient Initiated the Process With His Reservations With COVID-19?
OUTCOME:

• Patient had misgivings to initiate and wanted to wait until the COVID-19 pandemic is either under control in Illinois or when the vaccine will be available.

• Patient wanted to wait and will let the social worker know when he is ready to pursue kidney transplant.
Patient Scenario #3

• Ms. C is an African American 56 y/o female diagnosed with ESRD, type 2 diabetes, with other kidney diabetic complications.

• Patient was on the cadaver wait list for kidney transplant. Patient received phone call from the kidney transplant center that there was a kidney available. Patient rejected the initial phone call from the transplant center due to fears of being hospitalized and complications related to transplant surgery due to COVID-19.

• The Social worker, care team staff at the dialysis center, and patient's family encouraged patient to pursue kidney transplant. The benefits of pursuing the transplant was explained to patient. Patient received a second phone call the next day.
How Do You Think the Patient Responded to the Second Phone Call That She Received From the Transplant Center?
OUTCOME:

• Patient was encouraged by the social worker, the staff at the dialysis center, and her family’s support to accept the *kidney transplant* with the second phone call.

• Patient went on to get her kidney transplant and recovered well in the hospital and is doing well overall, even in this time of the pandemic.
Summary:

- COVID-19 pandemic radically changed some aspects of patient education and referral process in the dialysis setting.
- In-person education classes at transplant centers—halted.
- The transplant centers and dialysis clinics working together to establish different methods of education and referral processes in providing education about the benefits of pursuing kidney transplant.
- Some elements of education remained unchanged.
- New goal during pandemic: identify/address fears and concerns of the patient experience due to COVID-19 to overcome those apprehensions in pursuing kidney transplant.
- The main objective for transplant centers and dialysis centers is to support our patients with potential kidney transplantation.
A Transplant Center’s Perspective-
Educating Dialysis Patients During the Pandemic

John Valencia- Strategic Outreach Consultant
Rush University Medical Center is one of Chicago's oldest healthcare organizations. Its heritage extends back to 1837 when Rush Medical College was established. St. Luke's Hospital, founded in 1864, and Presbyterian Hospital, founded in 1883, merged in 1956 to form Presbyterian-St. Luke's Hospital. The subsequent incorporation of these pioneer institutions in 1969 created Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center, which was renamed Rush University Medical Center in October 2003. Currently, Rush University Medical Center (RUMC) includes: …
Rush “Tower” as the main hospital.

824 beds
• Major referral center that provides primary, secondary, and tertiary care to the immediate community and patients from across the country.

• Rush Children's Hospital,
  - 120 bed pediatric facility
  - Medical and surgical care for newborns, infants, children and adolescents.
COVID-19 UTP Clinic Protocols

• Only 1 person (the patient) allowed to clinic
  - Initial
  - Follow-up
  - *No children (visitors) allowed at RUMC.

• Mask protocol
  - Masks *must* be worn the entire time including in exam rooms.

• Social distancing
  - Each seat in waiting room >= 6 feet from every other seat.
  - Patients allowed up to clinic shortly before actual time—no crowding.
    Early arrivals—wait in building main lobby (also socially distanced seating, reduced occupancy).
  - Transplant education is given to patients individually in PowerPoint presentation (Spanish and English).
    → New approach to overcome bottleneck from COVID-19 protocols.

*UTP-University Transplant Program
COVID-19 UTP Clinic Protocols

• **Pre-Check in Main Lobby**—Temperature check

• **Pre-Check UTP Clinic**
  — **Second** Temperature check, screening questions: cough, fever, malaise, sick contacts → if yes → ED or self-quarantine
    - If patient has positive symptoms or a positive covid-19 test or positive sick contact: appointment rescheduled
    - If patient has previously tested positive, they must bring their Negative covid-19 results to appointment

• **What has NOT changed?**
  — New kidney transplant patient evaluation is continuing.
  — No clinic closure.
  — Work up testing has not been affected.
  — Waitlisted patients still seen annually (pre-COVID-19 standard).
Impact of COVID-19 on Patient Education & Referral—Transplant

• **Major impact on:**
  — No group class education in clinic
  — Restriction of one-on-one education in dialysis units (can’t socially distance; transmission risk)
  — Patients with +++ fear of coming to hospital for initial medical evaluation

• **Net effect**
  — Reduced patient education
  — Reduced patient referral
  — Reduced accessibility to transplant evaluation

= delay in workup & listing for renal transplant
Solution to COVID-19 on Patient Education & Referral—Transplant

Virtual Lobby Day

Developer: John Valencia

Idea:
1. Utilize technology to bridge the gap of providing transplant education to dialysis patients.
   A. Majority of patients have access to a cell phone; not as many have access to a computer/tablet.

Aim:
1. Provide kidney transplant education via telephone or video call.
2. Electronic referral (not paper-based)
Solution to COVID-19 on Patient Education & Referral—Transplant

Pilot Launch: Provide transplant education to dialysis patients via a virtual platform

• Virtual Lobby Day—2 dialysis units
  — August 27–28, September 3–4

• What we learned
  — Successes:
    ▪ Patients were open to the idea of receiving information via telephone/video
    ▪ Older patients like the video approach
    ▪ Patients like the paperless process to schedule appointment-QR code

• Opportunities for improvement:
  — How to get more patients interested
  — Accessing the patients via video

• Changes made
  — Allowed more time for staff to engage the patients to sign up
  — Created an informational patient handout
  — Offered the video access via Facetime™, WhatsApp™, Zoom™, or Webex™
Solution to COVID-19 on Patient Education & Referral—Transplant

Elements to the Virtual Lobby Day:

1. Coordinate a date.

2. Two weeks prior—a packet will be delivered to the dialysis unit.
   - Packet includes: Instructions, patient handouts, sign-up sheet, QR Code flyer, and paper applications.

3. Patients will be given a handout by the social worker/dialysis transplant coordinator.

4. If patient is interested in receiving more information, he/she will provide his/her contact information and will be assigned a call time during his/her treatment time.

5. Social worker/dialysis transplant coordinator will send the patient sign-up sheet via fax or email the day before the Virtual Lobby Day.
Virtual Transplant Lobby Day

Thank you for coordinating this lobby day and I truly appreciate all your help!

- Please provide a flyer to each of your patients prior to the lobby day.
- If a patient is interested, please provide their contact information on the sheet that is included in this packet. Please allow 15 minutes per call. In the comments section, please note if they prefer a specific language. Prior to the lobby day, please email the sheet to John.Valencia@rush.edu
- I will call the patients that are interested in receiving a telephone or video call during their treatment shift unless otherwise stated.
- If the patient is interested in pursuing a transplant, I can complete the form during the call or if not possible, patient will ask social worker for the application or QRI appointment code.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to give me a call.

Rush University Transplant Program
John Valencia
Transplant Outreach Consultant
312/942-3622
Learn More About Kidney Transplant

- Are there age limits or medical conditions that rule out kidney transplantation?
- What factors are considered in organ matching and allocation?
- How does the matching process work?
- What do I need to do to be considered for a kidney transplant?
- How do I get on the waiting list?
- How do I know that I am listed?
- Can I list at more than one hospital?
- What questions should I ask the transplant team?
- How long will I have to wait?
- How will they find the right donor for me?
- How are kidneys distributed?

If you are interested in receiving a telephone or video call from a transplant educator during your treatment time on the following date below, please sign up with your social worker.

Rush University Transplant Program
John Valencia
Will have a virtual lobby day on
Thursday, December 10 & Friday, December 11, 2020
Rush.edu/transplant

Aprenda Más Sobre El Trasplante de Riñón

- ¿Hay límite de edad o condiciones médicas que descarten un trasplante de riñón?
- ¿Qué factores son tenidos en cuenta para la compatibilidad y asignación de órganos?
- ¿Cómo funciona el proceso de compatibilidad?
- ¿Qué debo hacer para ser tenido en cuenta para un trasplante de riñón?
- ¿Cómo llego a la lista de espera?
- ¿Cómo sé que estoy en la lista?
- ¿Puedo estar en listas en más de un hospital?
- ¿Qué preguntas debo hacerle al equipo de trasplante?
- ¿Cuánto tiempo debo esperar?
- ¿Cómo encontrarán el donante apropiado para mí?
- ¿Cómo son distribuidos los riñones?

Si está interesado en recibir una llamada telefónica o una videollamada del educador de trasplantes durante su tratamiento, inscríbase con su trabajada social.

Rush University Transplant Program
John Valencia
Habrá una sesión informativa virtual
El jueves 10 de diciembre y viernes 11 de diciembre, 2020
Rush.edu/transplant
# Patient Sign-Up Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialysis Center</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Day/Time 15 minutes intervals</th>
<th>Video or Phone Call</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Valencia</td>
<td>312-942-3622</td>
<td>Tuesday 9:00 am.</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>Example-Spanish Speaking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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QR Appointment Code

QR Code Instructions for Appointment

- **Step 1:** Use your phone camera mode and let your phone focus on the code below.

- **Step 2:** Your phone will open a window above your screen as shown in this picture. Click on this window.

- **Step 3:** Fill out form.

*Android users:* If your camera does not scan please download a QR reader on google play.
Day of the Virtual Lobby Day/Referral Process

1. Patients are called on the assigned time/day.

   A. If a patient is interest in pursuing transplant, he/she will need to complete an initial patient form in one of three ways:
      1. During phone/video call with the transplant outreach coordinator
      2. QR code
      3. Paper application

2. Follow up with social worker/dialysis center contact I performed regarding the outcome of each patient call.

3. Once a referral form is turned in, a scheduler will review application and will inform the patient with next steps:
   A. Standard
      1. 48-hour call back to review patient’s insurance and medical history
      2. Patient appointment scheduled
Success of the Virtual Lobby Day

Patient Feedback:

“He spoke to me in a way that I could understand about what I should expect from a work-up. It made me feel confident to go ahead and schedule an evaluation appointment.”

“This was a great idea for me because I wasn’t comfortable speaking in front of strangers in the lobby. It was a personalized call and I have my first appointment scheduled in October.”

“After 20 years of dialysis, COVID-19 has convinced me to pursue transplant”
Conclusion

• Technology has bridged the gap in providing transplant education to dialysis patients during the pandemic.

• This is a good time to encourage your patients to consider kidney transplant.

• Collaboration between the transplant center and dialysis staff is critical in the success of the Virtual Lobby Day concept.

• Approach your local transplant center about providing transplant education virtually.

• If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me!
Thanks

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Let Us Hear From You

• Q&As from chat and Q&A panels
Flu Vaccination Toolkit

Influenza toolkit for providers featuring:

- Flu facts and taglines
- Social media content
- Flu videos
- Print-ready materials
- On-demand training and educational events
- Visit esrdncc.org/flu today!
Inspirational Posters

• Evidence-inspired 12” x18” posters
• PDF format for on-demand printing
• Focus on psychological/physical health, emergency preparedness, and COVID-19.

To view, visit https://esrdncc.org/professionals/inspirational-posters/.
The Kidney Hub

• The Kidney Hub—Mobile-friendly web tool created with patients, for patients
• Links to new videos and helpful resources added.
• Visit [www.TheKidneyHub.org](http://www.TheKidneyHub.org) today!
Our Next COVID-19 Webinar Events

• Patient-focused event: January 5, 2021, 4 p.m. ET
• Provider-focused event: January 13, 2021, 3 p.m. ET

Visit kidneyCOVIDinfocenter.com to register.
Thank You!

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

Additional COVID-19 resources for patients and providers:

www.kidneyCOVIDinfocenter.com

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