



Understanding QAPI

Introduction to QAPI

Peer mentoring is a great way for mentors and mentees to talk about **Quality Assessment & Performance Improvement (QAPI)** and how it works. Peer mentors can share how their experiences with their dialysis facility staff in QAPI meetings and activities can improve the quality of care for all patients at the facility. They can also encourage mentees to get involved in QAPI.

QAPI is about improving the quality of care and quality of life for people with End Stage Renal Disease. Quality Assurance (QA) and Performance Improvement (PI) are two ways to manage the quality of health care you receive.

- QA is a way to meet Medicare standards. These standards are in place to make sure patients get quality health care.
- PI is what is done to improve patient care. For example, this could be improving the number of patients screened for depression.



The dialysis team works with patients and family to find ways to make care better and to solve problems. Inviting patients and family members to QAPI meetings gives dialysis staff the chance to involve patients, family members, and/or caregivers in quality improvement activities at the facility.

QAPI activities are the actions dialysis staff and patients take to improve the quality-of-care patients receive. For example, the facility might create a “Zero Infections” campaign and invite staff and patients to monitor things like hand washing, glove use, and cleaning standards between patient treatments.

These are a few benefits of patients and family members being involved in QAPI:

- Allows patients’ family and caregivers to participate with staff to make things better
- Gives patients a chance to help make the quality of care and quality of life better for all people on dialysis
- Provides the patient a formal place to bring their ideas to the staff
- Improves the experience of care for patients and their peers

When and Where Does QAPI Take Place?

QAPI meetings are held monthly. Most QAPI meetings take place at the facility in a conference room. The QAPI team usually includes the facility manager, dietitian, social worker, and medical director. They come together to discuss and review the quality standards and goals. Patients and family members are invited to attend QAPI to help staff see quality through the eyes of the patient. If patients and family members cannot attend the QAPI meeting in person, they can ask about attending by Zoom™ or phone.

Following the meeting, dialysis staff are working to ensure quality care and patient safety at the facility. The work might be related to improving patient education about home dialysis and transplant options, or ensuring community resources like transportation options, support groups, or peer mentoring programs like this one are available to patients and families.

What is the Role of the Patient and Family Member?

During the meeting, the dialysis facility manager may ask patients for their opinion and/or to share their experiences while receiving care at the facility. The questions are meant to help the staff make the dialysis experience better for patients. If you do not understand something, just ask!

Patients are subject matter experts about the care that is being provided in the dialysis facility. Patients can provide suggestions and ideas on improving care, safety, access to care, and much more. Suggestions might include providing a hand sanitizer station in the waiting room or installing safety grab bars in the restrooms.

Family members and caregivers are also important to the QAPI process. Family members hear and learn about facility activities through the eyes of the patient.



Patients and family talk about their concerns. These questions may help you get ready for the meeting:

- What are we doing well in the dialysis facility?
- What areas could we improve in the dialysis facility?
- What do you think are the most common reasons patients miss or shorten treatments?
- What is the best way for staff to communicate with patients about their treatment?

What are Examples or Concern for a QAPI Meeting?

Here are some examples of topics that patients can offer their feedback or suggestions:

Patient satisfaction and quality of care concerns	Support transitioning to home dialysis or making a referral to the transplant waitlist
Lobby Days and patient education	Transportation availability and community resources
Treatment timeliness and scheduling flexibility	Infection prevention

What Happens After the QAPI Meeting?

Follow up with the facility manager about decisions or plans made during the meeting that will affect what happens on the dialysis floor. Keep sharing your ideas with staff. Tell them if you would like to attend a QAPI meeting again in the future. Be sure to share your experience with other patients and remain active in improving the quality of care for all patients at your facility.

Additional Resources

Because Your Voice Matters! <https://esrdncc.org/globalassets/patients/qapimeetingprep508.pdf>

Patient Module: Understanding and Participating in QAPI

https://esrdncc.org/contentassets/84ad9a66a2f344efa26e36cab6ef9425/patient-qapi_f.pdf

Professional Module: Patient Engagement in Quality Assessment and Performance Improvement (QAPI)

https://esrdncc.org/globalassets/professionals/qap_professionals_f.pdf