



Network

Consumer News

LARGE PRINT VERSION

New Federal Rules and Your Care

The Medicare insurance program spent \$22.7 billion on the care of dialysis and transplant patients in 2006. In order to protect Medicare beneficiaries and promote quality of care, the government has minimum health and safety rules for all dialysis centers that bill the Medicare insurance program.

In the coming months, patients will notice some changes at their dialysis centers. These changes are being made to meet new governmental rules and may have already started at your center.

The new rules for dialysis centers (called Final Conditions for Coverage (CfC) for End-Stage Renal Disease Facilities) were published on April 15th and took effect on October 14th of this year.

The new rules impact the care of all patients at Medicare-certified dialysis centers, regardless of insurance status.

Listed below are just some of the areas impacted by the new rules:

Patient Rights

Dialysis centers must inform patients of their rights and responsibilities. The rules provide a list of the minimum rights of all dialysis patients. The center must allow a patient to exercise his/her rights and it must also protect those rights.

For a complete list of the updated patient rights, contact the Network or request a copy at your dialysis center.

Patient Safety

Dialysis centers are required to follow additional infection control rules. These rules are intended to prevent the spread of infections and other diseases at dialysis centers.

Patients and visitors may be asked to take extra steps to protect themselves and others. Staff may also change how they do things – such as how often they wash their hands and the process for getting you ready for dialysis.

Patient Involvement

Patients will be encouraged to be involved in their care. In fact, you are considered an equal member of the care team – which also includes your doctor, nurse, dietitian, and social worker. You should be invited to participate in all aspects of your care, including the assessment and planning process. In the coming months, you may notice that you are being encouraged to be more involved.

Quality of Life

Studies have found that how *you* view your physical and mental health is vital. For instance, people who see their quality of life as poor are more likely to need hospital care.

Therefore, the new rules require each center to use a quality of life survey with patients. You are going to be asked by your care team to complete a survey called the KDQOL™-36 (Kidney Disease Quality of Life). This survey should provide you and your team with important information regarding your health.

Patient Satisfaction

Your dialysis center is required to assess and to take actions to improve patient satisfaction. Therefore, you may be asked to complete a patient satisfaction survey. It is important that you provide your center honest feedback about your care and experience as a patient, so they can improve.

Quality Improvement

The dialysis center is required to have in place a specific plan to assess and improve the care of all patients.

Treatment Options

The dialysis center must inform you of all treatment options available not only at your center, but also in your area. This may include in-center options, home options, transplant options, alternative treatment schedules, etc. For more information on treatment options in your area, ask your care team.

In many ways, these new rules will require major changes. Like all changes, there will be a period of transition. Both patients and staff are likely to have questions and concerns about the changes.

If you do not understand why something is changing, ask questions. In turn, your care team will likely ask for your patience as they make the necessary changes to meet the new rules.

SPECIFIC CHANGES YOU MAY NOTICE

Here is a short list of things that may change at your center.

- ✓ You may receive a notice of your revised Patient *Rights and Responsibilities*.
- ✓ Someone from your doctor's office may visit you at the dialysis center or visit you more frequently.
- ✓ You may be asked to see someone at your doctor's office monthly, if you do not already.
- ✓ You may be asked to complete the KDQOL™³⁶.
- ✓ You may be asked to keep your face and dialysis access visible at all times.
- ✓ You will have access to information regarding treatment options in your area and the specific criteria used by Transplant Centers.
- ✓ Visitors may be asked to wear protective garments or to take special precautions.
- ✓ Members of the care team may ask you more questions to determine your care needs.
- ✓ You may be asked to participate more in your care.

LEARNING POINTS

- ✓ **Conditions for Coverage** are the federal rules for all dialysis centers.
- ✓ **KDQOL™36** is a Quality of Life survey patients are going to be asked to complete.

RELATED WEB RESOURCES

Dialysis Facility Compare
www.medicare.gov/dialysis

Home Dialysis
www.homedialysis.org

Life Options
www.lifeoptions.org

If you would like the information but do not have access to the Internet, please contact us:

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