



END STAGE RENAL DISEASE  
NETWORK OF TEXAS

February 2021: Volume Two | Issue Two

# HEALTH & H.O.P.E.

MOTTO: HELP ON PROCESSING EVERYTHING DIALYSIS

## Is a Kidney Transplant Right for Me?

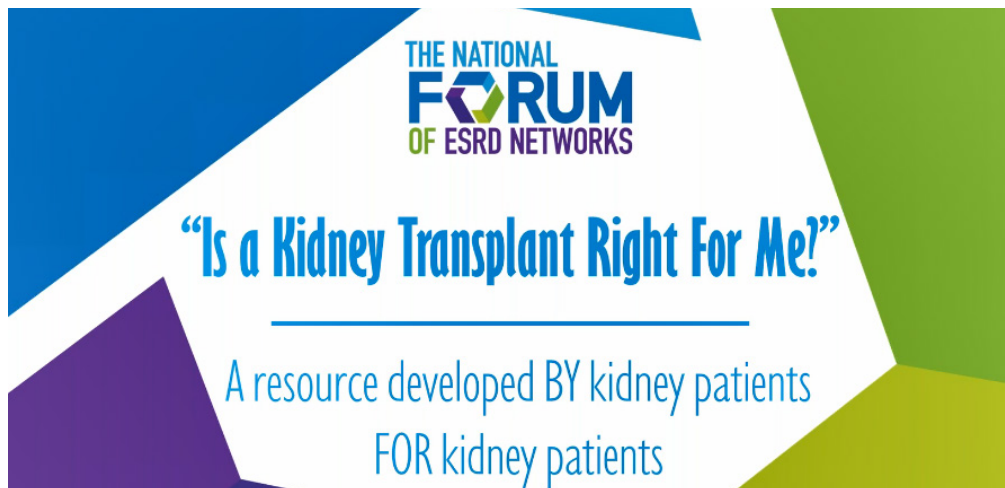


Figure 1 Watch this 10-minute video for additional information

### [The Patient Directed Kidney Transplant Toolkit](#)

The Forum of ESRD Networks Kidney Patient Advisory Council (KPAC) has designed this Patient Directed Kidney Transplant Toolkit to assist patients as they navigate through the Transplant System. It is intended to be used with the Forum's Kidney Transplant Toolkit\* developed by the Medical Advisory Council (MAC) to help guide the conversations between patients and their care teams throughout the entire transplant process. While transplant is often the recommended choice for a patient dealing with kidney failure, there are factors to consider when determining if transplant is right for you. This guide developed by the Forum's Kidney Patient Advisory

Council can help you in the decision process. During the development process of this toolkit, it became apparent that it could be a useful tool for both patients AND facilities. While all facilities and all Networks have a Transplant assistance requirement, this is the first time that process has been presented through the Patient's eyes.

The Kidney Transplant Toolkit developed by the Medical Advisory Council (MAC) can be downloaded at [https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.esrdnetworks.org/documents/Kidney\\_Transplant\\_Toolkit\\_2020\\_0319.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.esrdnetworks.org/documents/Kidney_Transplant_Toolkit_2020_0319.pdf)

Resource adopted from The National Forum of ESRD Networks at <https://esrdnetworks.org/>



## Myth-Busting Home Dialysis

There are so many myths and misconceptions surrounding home dialysis. Home dialysis gives patients the opportunity to dialyze during the day, overnight, or even while traveling. Do not let fear stop you from living your life and enjoying the things you love. It is important to have all the facts to help you make the best treatment decision. Common myths regarding home dialysis include:

- It is too hard to learn to perform dialysis at home.
- If something goes wrong at home, I will not have an expert to help.
- I cannot do home dialysis because I am scared to put a needle in my arm.
- I need a lot of room for my dialysis and for my supplies.
- I cannot have pets.
- I must have a care partner.
- I cannot travel.
- You get infections easily.

*continued on next page*

### Myth-Busting Home, cont'd.

To learn more about the myths, fears, and facts regarding home dialysis, watch the [Home Dialysis Hero Interactive Event](#) with our Patient Advisory Committee (PAC). In this event, the myths, fears, and facts on home dialysis are discussed from their perspective of the Patient Advisory Committee. Ask your care team if home dialysis can be an option for you.

More information on home dialysis myths, is available on the NCC's [Uncovering Myths About Home Dialysis](#) booklet.

#### Home Dialysis Hero Interactive Event



Resource: <https://homedialysis.org/>

A message for patients from patients

# STAY STRONG

A VACCINE IS ON ITS WAY

**DON'T LET PANDEMIC FATIGUE CATCH YOU OFF GUARD**

Stay alert  
Wear a mask  
Wash your hands  
Socially distance  
Don't miss treatments

Kidney patients may not be able to fight off COVID-19.  
Let's all stay safe and stay healthy. **We can do this!**

THE NATIONAL FORUM OF ESRD NETWORKS | KIDNEY PATIENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (KPAC)

For more kidney patient resources visit [www.ESRDnetworks.org/toolkits/patient-toolkits](http://www.ESRDnetworks.org/toolkits/patient-toolkits)

2020-12-18 FINAL

## FAQ's

**What does the vaccine do?** The vaccine helps your body develop immunity to the virus, without having to get the virus. Most COVID vaccines available require you to get two doses.

**Will the vaccine give me COVID-19?** No, none of the vaccines available now use the live virus that causes COVID-19.

**When will the vaccine be available?** The vaccine has limited availability and is currently being given to healthcare providers and residents of long-term care facilities. As it becomes more available, more groups of people will get the vaccine.

**What are the side effects?** Common side effects are pain and swelling in the arm where you got the shot. Other side effects include fever, chills, tiredness, and headache, like the flu. Side effects should go away within a few days. If they do not, you should contact your doctor immediately.

**Where can I get more information?** Please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/> for more information. Please speak with your doctor for more information about getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

# RECOVERED FROM COVID-19?

You could be at risk for Kidney Disease. A FREE test can give you the answers you need.



## SCHEDULE YOUR FREE KIDNEY SCREENING:

Step  
1

### Choose Your Screening Location

**Drive-up Screenings at the Texas Kidney Foundation Office**  
4204 Gardendale #106, San Antonio, TX 78229

**Community Screenings at Various Locations**

Visit [TxKidney.org/programs-events](https://www.txkidney.org/programs-events) to see our calendar of FREE screenings

Step  
2

### Scan QR Code to Register

Fill out our quick registration form and we will schedule your FREE screening appointment



### What to Expect at Your Kidney Screening

- Kidney screenings test for high blood pressure, kidney disease and diabetes.
- Takes approximately 15 minutes.
- You will receive guidance for next steps.

Interested in hosting a drive-up screening at your church, community center or other location?

Call Texas Kidney Foundation at (210) 396-8440

**TEXAS  
KIDNEY  
FOUNDATION**

*Saving Lives*

Early Detection • Education • Support

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# TEXAS KIDNEY FOUNDATION ADOPTS WICIS 3.0 TELEHEALTH SOLUTION

Delivering Safer, More Efficient Kidney Screenings and Accelerating Timely Identification of Patients at Risk



## Overview

The healthcare industry has experienced challenging shifts over the last year. In response to the COVID-19 virus, hospitals and medical facilities had to shift their priorities to mitigate risk of exposure to patients and staff by fast-tracking telehealth and remote patient care solutions. **This technology delivers safe, effective and efficient healthcare services and provides growth opportunities for channel partners who want to expand their business.**

## SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Tech Data, a leading global solution aggregator of IT technology helped a longtime public sector channel partner, AATD, to grow and expand its healthcare business. AATD's customer, Texas Kidney Foundation (TKF) needed a solution to support safe and efficient kidney screenings for their patients while minimizing exposure to COVID-19 or other infections. By partnering with one of Tech Data's premiere IoT and Data Solutions vendors, WiCis Health, AATD delivered a world-class telehealth solution.

The WiCis 3.0 Telehealth platform was designed by a doctor for doctors with the goal of providing a flexible, scalable, easy to use HIPAA compliant solution that supports familiar cloud-based clinical workflows, video conferencing and live vital signs monitoring. The WiCis solution can be customized quickly with drag-and-drop features to support COVID-19 screenings and any medical organizations careflows.

When AATD learned about the WiCis solution through Tech Data they knew that it was ideal for TKF and its growing need for enhanced telehealth. Leadership teams from AATD and TKF met to discuss the opportunity and strategize.

**“We had a situation where we had to solve several business challenges of our client during a pandemic. Tech Data listened to our needs and proposed a comprehensive, customizable telehealth solution from WiCis Telehealth. The WiCis offering enabled the Texas Kidney Foundation to cost effectively achieve their digital transformation goals and meet the needs of the new normal.”**

– Vernon Putnam, Chairman and President, AATD

## CUSTOMER CHALLENGES

TKF wanted to make it easier, faster and safer to screen and test for kidney disease. It also wanted to provide the ability to identify the at-risk population for chronic kidney disease during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Face-to-face kidney screenings take from 15-20 minutes, and TKF needed a more efficient solution that limited physical contact and could be scaled to achieve a higher number of screenings.

## CUSTOMER GOALS

- Replace paper-based forms with web-based forms and automate workflows.
- Will screen 10,000 new patients by Q2 of 2021.
- Limit face-to-face interaction and accelerate individual kidney screenings.
- Begin transitioning kidney screenings to 100% contactless at-home screenings.
- Remotely monitor individuals.
- Maintain accurate and reliable screening records.
- Create prompts for future patient follow-up every six months.
- Remotely educate and support patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD) and the family members of individuals with CKD.

## OUTCOME

After TKF discussed its challenges and goals with AATD, the organizations implemented the WiCis solution successfully, and now the WiCis 3.0 Telehealth solution replaces TKF's paper forms with digital forms and automated workflows, while also providing TKF with the ability to remotely perform safer kidney check screenings more efficiently. The WiCis system also triggers an alert for any patient who has COVID symptoms. TKF reviews the record in question and can decide to contact the patient via video-conferencing by utilizing the 'Nudge' function.

According to Texas Kidney Foundation CEO Tiffany Jones-Smith, there has been a:

- **33% increase in screenings** -> TKF will increase screenings from a goal of 7,500 screened in a year to an actual screened number of 10,000 in a matter of three to four months or less.
- **50% reduction in screening time** -> Screening time has been cut in half – down from 20 minutes per participant to 10 minutes per participant.
- **99.99% increase in safety with contactless screening** -> Staff and participants are safer because of the decreased contact.

**“The Texas Kidney Foundation is 100% committed to the prevention of kidney disease. According to the CDC, one in seven Texans have some stage of kidney disease and do not know it. The WiCis platform enables us to perform contactless at-home early detection kidney screenings for timely identification of those at risk. With WiCis, we educate participants and their family members safely with an exceptional remote patient experience that is applicable pre- and post-pandemic. The automated workflows are easy for our staff and participants to use. The WiCis platform is a natural fit with Texas Kidney Foundation.”**

– Tiffany Jones-Smith, Chief Executive Officer, Texas Kidney Foundation



Recently Network 14 received a call from a patient who receives dialysis at Wilbarger General Hospital Dialysis in Vernon, Texas, praising his healthcare team. The patient wanted to thank his nurse, Shalimar Williams, for all her hard work and not giving up on him. "I can

be a handful", stated the patient. He also wanted the Network to know about the hard work and dedication of Pamela Cardona, Dani Solis, and Sam Jimenez. He reported even during a pandemic, these individuals provide the patients and other staff with laughter and kindness.

Finally, the patient stated, "I would not have continued with dialysis if it had not been for Tina Ishcomer. She stuck with me and helped me make the transition into dialysis. She saved my life, and I am grateful".

From the Network 14 staff, a huge thank you to these five individuals for making such a great impact on this patient's life and as well as other patients. Thanks for taking pride in what you do and doing it well. The renal community is blessed to have caring caregivers such as you in its arena.



*Happy Valentine's Day!*



Happy Valentine's Day! Do not forget to wash your hands and wear your mask.

Thank You! Happy Valentine's Day to you too...stay safe.





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NETWORK OF TEXAS



**The Network is on social media!**  
Visit our social media channels

Contact us:



Networks 8 and 14 are the End Stage Renal Disease Networks (ESRD) that serve as the Medicare contractor for the states of Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas. We are committed to improving the quality and experience of care for all ESRD kidney patients within our four-state patient services area.

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Website: <https://www.esrdnetwork.org/>

Visit our social media channels:  
[Connect with us on LinkedIn](#)  
[Follow us on Twitter](#)  
[Follow us on Facebook](#)

PATIENT AND PROVIDER NEWSLETTER



**Skin Care: "Love the Skin You're In"**

The skin is our largest organ - it protects our bodies, helps us maintain just the right temperature, and gives us the sense of touch. If our skin is irritated or damaged, it can be very painful. A surprisingly large number of chronic dialysis patients suffer from the itchy skin problems of dry skin and itching. Those skin complaints are not life-threatening, but they can be very uncomfortable and distressing, and as a result, can affect your quality of life.

**Why does my skin itch?** Itching is a symptom that can be caused as a side effect of your kidney disease or dialysis treatment, although the exact cause of itching in dialysis patients is not always clear. Possible causes may be high levels of the parathyroid hormone, or high levels of phosphate in the blood. Also, calcium released from the bones can deposit in the blood vessels, joints and skin which may lead to itching. Other possible causes are the retention of toxins, iron deficiency, general inflammation and allergic reactions.

**What can I do?** It is extremely important that you monitor your calcium-phosphate balance, follow your nurse's advice to ensure low phosphate intake, and be sure to take your phosphate binders as prescribed by your physician. If you do have problems with itching and/or dry skin, make a point to discuss the



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To file a grievance please contact ESRD Network of Texas Inc. (Network 14) at 4099 McEwen Rd, Suite 820 Dallas, TX 75244.  
Office: 972-503-3215, fax: 972-503-3219, Toll-free: 877-886-4435,  
Email: [nw14info@allianthealth.org](mailto:nw14info@allianthealth.org), website: [www.esrdnetwork.org/](http://www.esrdnetwork.org/)