

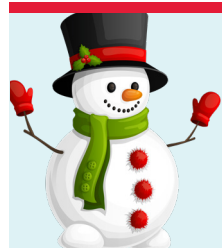
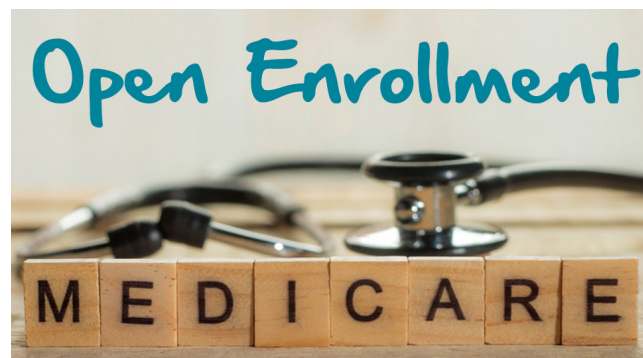


HEALTH & H.O.P.E.

HELP ON PROCESSING EVERYTHING DIALYSIS

Medicare Open Enrollment Period is Here

From October 15, 2022, until December 7, 2022, you can join, switch, or drop a plan for your 2023 Medicare coverage. Your coverage will begin on January 1 (if the plan gets your request by December 7). For more information about Medicare Advantage and Part D, visit the Medicare.gov website, <https://www.medicare.gov/sign-up-change-plans/joining-a-health-or-drug-plan>.



Home for the Holidays

Has your clinic staff talked to you about home dialysis choices that might fit your daily life better than your current treatment? Your treatment is your choice and should be discussed with your health care team. Many people experience life changes, and what worked for them in the past may not work for them now. Home dialysis can offer more scheduling flexibility and more time with family and friends. Here is a simple online tool to help you choose the right treatment. <https://mykidneylifeplan.org/>

Self-Care is Important

Taking care of yourself is essential. Here is a short video on ways to relax and take a break during these trying times: https://quality.allianthealth.org/media_library/ncrn-self-care-video/

Avoid Hospitalizations

In recent months, the Network found a rise in emergency room visits and hospitalizations due to problems linked to renal failure and dialysis. If you are running late or need to skip treatment, please make up your dialysis session as soon as possible. Also, tell your care team of any problems as soon as you notice them. Finding them early and getting help is key to staying away from the hospital. Use the links below to find the zone tools that can help you refresh what you know about issues to look for to avoid a visit to the hospital.

- [Post-Dialysis Zone Tool \(tmfnetworks.org\)](https://tmfnetworks.org/post-dialysis-zone-tool)
- [Signs of infection and sepsis at home \(tmfnetworks.org\)](https://tmfnetworks.org/signs-of-infection-and-sepsis-at-home)

Ways to be Involuntary Discharged

Patients need to know they can be let go from their dialysis clinic. There are several ways a patient can be let go, such as:

- If they cannot pay for their dialysis
- If the patient fires their kidney doctor
- If the patient does not follow clinic rules
- If the patient makes threats

Did you know that all dialysis clinics have a “zero tolerance” rule? This means if you make a threat, you could lead to being let go from your clinic. All dialysis units have a zero weapons rule as well. Bringing a weapon or making a verbal threat may cause you to be let go and maybe a call to the police. Many patients let go from their clinic will have difficulty finding a new clinic and may have to drive further to dialysis. Also, if you hear something in which you feel a person might harm themselves or others, **say something** to your clinic manager or social worker.

Importance of Attending QAPI Meetings

Your dialysis clinic should invite patients to participate in a Quality Assessment & Performance Improvement (QAPI) meeting. You can also ask to join a QAPI meeting in person or by phone. This meeting allows you to talk to the dialysis clinic leaders about your concerns or other patient issues, suggestions or comments. The ideas and results that come out of QAPI meetings often affect how the dialysis clinic is run. Some clinics call their QAPI meeting by a different name. You do not have to wait to be invited. Ask your clinic manager if you can attend.

Before the meeting, write notes on what you would like to discuss with the health care team. This will help you stay on track during the meeting. Remember, your ideas can help make patient care better.

After the meeting:

- Follow up with the clinic manager about results or plans made during the meeting that will affect what happens on the dialysis floor.
- Keep sharing your ideas with the staff and tell them if you would like to attend a QAPI meeting again in the future.
- If you would like, share your experience with other patients.

Life Plans

A life plan is a set of goals you create to help you to get the things that mean the most to you. A life plan is built around personal goals and dreams. The goals can include:

- Going back to school or work
- Volunteering
- Traveling to a place you always wanted to visit
- Spending time with family

You can also set health goals and ways to join your community. There is no reason you cannot achieve your goals if they are realistic. Often what holds us back is fear of failure.

For more information about life plans and how to create one, go to [esrdncc.org](https://www.esrdncc.org). The goal-setting toolkit was created by dialysis and transplant patients for patients.

Dialysis 5-Star Rating Program

The Dialysis Facility Compare (DFC) Star Program is a way for patients to see how their dialysis clinic rates against other dialysis clinics in their local area. Each dialysis clinic is graded on nine health numbers.

Based on these numbers, the dialysis clinic is graded from 1 to 5 stars. For more information about the 5-Star rating program, visit [kidney.org](https://www.kidney.org).

Dialysis Compare

Medicare.gov allows dialysis patients to compare their clinic with others in their area or locate a clinic if the patient is moving or traveling. Always ask for help from your clinic social worker when moving or traveling.

Type in your city or zip code, check dialysis clinics and click "Search." You

will be given a list of dialysis units with their address, phone number and 5-Star rating. In addition, you can choose the distance you wish to travel and the type of dialysis the clinic offers. For more information or to use the dialysis compare tool, go to [Medicare.gov](https://www.Medicare.gov).

Vocational Rehabilitation: How Can It Help You?

What is vocational rehab? It can be job training, but it primarily uses skills you already have. Your local vocational rehab office has companies who are signed up and ready to take you with your unique needs. They value the chance to work with skilled people, even if those people may need work and schedule changes. In today's job market, dialysis patients are being placed very quickly!



If you want to continue to work, your state vocational rehab offices can help you learn new skills or use your current skills to find a job that works with your schedule and disability. You will be asked to set the hours you feel you can handle and work around your dialysis schedule. The vocational rehab office will assess your skills and your needs. Then you will be referred to an agent who will match you with a job that fits your needs. They have contracted jobs that can work with those who are disabled. Those employers have agreed to work to create jobs for you. There are many success stories of dialysis patients getting a job quickly. Ask your social worker about a referral to a vocational rehab program in your state. If interested, call your state vocational rehab office and tell them you want a job and are on dialysis.

Below is a list of vocational rehab offices in Network 8 and 14:

- **Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services:** 1-800-441-7607
- **Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation:** 1-800-443-1000
- **Tennessee Vocational Rehabilitation Program:** 1-833-751-0597
- **Texas Vocational Rehabilitation Program:** 1-800-628-5115 (option 3)

To file a grievance, contact the following agencies:

ESRD Network 8 - Phone: 1-877-936-9260; Email: nw8info@allianthealth.org;

Mail: 775 Woodlands Pkwy, Suite 310, Ridgeland, MS 39157;

Website: <https://quality.allianthealth.org/topic/esrd-nw8/> -

For patients and facilities in AL, MS, TN

ESRD Network 14 - Office: 972-503-3215; fax: 972-503-3219; Toll-free: 877-886-4435;

Email: nw14info@allianthealth.org

Mail: 4099 McEwen Rd, Suite 820 Dallas, TX 75244;

Website: <https://quality.allianthealth.org/topic/esrd-nw14/> - For patients and facilities in TX

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