

CMS tasked ESRD Networks to achieve a 50% increase in the number of facilities that successfully integrate patients and families into Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) during the ESRD five-year contract. QAPI meetings are defined as meetings that include patient concerns regarding care provided in the dialysis facility, suggestions for improving care in the dialysis facility, and addressing the concern or suggestion with action.

Are you concerned about patients participating in your monthly QAPI meetings and hearing confidential information? We have a few recommendations to help you meet the CMS expectations and keep confidential information safe.

1. Give the patient 15 minutes to speak at the beginning of the meeting, then let the patient leave the meeting, and go about their day. You can also have the patient attend the last 10-15 minutes of the meeting so that everyone is dismissed at the same time.
2. Have the patient call in for their portion of the meeting; they can be excused from the call once they have provided their information. This also benefits patients with transportation issues due to public transportation or costs.
3. Have the patient write their suggestions, comments, or concerns to be discussed during the meeting. Then report back to the patient the results in a timely manner.

What can be discussed:

- Information from other renal organizations, the ESRD NCC LAN, and ESRD Network Patient Advisory Committee
- Staff turnover/visiting staff—reassure the patient that quality care and their safety comes first
- What the Network is and its role
- Which CMS QAI projects the facility is involved in, and how well the clinic is doing
- No-show or non-compliant patients (keep the discussion generic) and what the facility is doing to educate patients
- How the patient can assist the facility in helping their fellow patients

Start slowly. Have the patient participate quarterly or more often if they have suggestions, comments, or concerns they wish to have the facility leadership address.

Don't be afraid to ask the patient to help resolve any comments, suggestions or concerns they bring to the meeting, if applicable.