

Patient Ambassador Monthly Meeting
Tuesday January 25, 2011 Re-Cap Notes

Washington DC Update

Tonya Saffer, Interim Executive Director

🕒 *Legislative and Regulatory Issues Update:*

- The Bundle:
 - Medicare has transitioned into a new payment system that “bundles” the costs of dialysis into a lump-sum payment to providers.
 - Patients may begin noticing changes to their care and cost sharing as early as January 1, 2011, and every dialysis clinic will be required to operate under the new payment system beginning January 1, 2014.
- Quality Incentive Program:
 - Medicare will begin monitoring the quality of the care you receive beginning in 2012.
 - Dialysis providers will have to report hemoglobin levels and URR measures to Medicare on all patients.
 - If the dialysis facility does not meet the standards for quality set up by Medicare they could receive a reduction in payment of up to 2%.
- Medigap:
 - Our previous data had indicated that California offered such coverage; it does not. There are only 30 states nationwide that offer such coverage for Medicare beneficiaries under 65 years of age.
 - DPC will be targeting several of the 20 remaining states not currently offering the coverage to enact change.
- Medicaid:
 - Given current state budget shortfalls, several states are having preliminary discussions about cutting state Medicaid benefits for “optional” programs. Even though Medicaid is a life-saving benefit for many dialysis patients, some of its state appropriations are not constitutionally mandated and thus are considered “optional.” DPC will fight to make sure these cuts do not happen.
- Immunosuppressive Drug Coverage:
 - DPC supports Senate bill S.565 and House bill HR. 1458 to allow all ESRD kidney transplant recipients under 65 to receive coverage of

immunosuppressive drugs for the life of the transplant through Medicare Part B.

- Veterans changes:
 - The Department of Veterans Affairs has ruled on reducing coverage for ESRD patients by aligning payment to non-VA health care providers, including dialysis clinics, with Medicare rates. However, the department also stated current contracts with dialysis providers will be honored and that efforts would be taken to ensure veterans do not lose access to dialysis services moving forward. The status of this is still pending, and we will keep you updated.
- Community Legislation:
 - Legislation passed late last year will strengthen kidney education programs, Medigap, study disease protection in minority communities, research on quality and care management gaps and increase kidney screenings for those at risk.
- Kidney Disease Coordination:
 - This will allow the organization of Accountable Care Organizations, which will lead to better coordination between dialysis clinics and hospitals and will prioritize the study of transportation barriers and other issues to strengthen kidney care.

World Kidney Day Community Events

Tonya Saffer, Interim Executive Director

Ben Wislinski, Project Manager

Hosting a World Kidney Day Community Event :

- Locations: community center, local church, kidney walk, dialysis clinic/facility tours, luncheons, park picnics.
- Theme: “Protect your kidneys, Save your heart.”
- Event focus:
 - Risk factors for kidney disease and the importance of controlling high blood pressure and diabetes
 - The importance of kidney screenings and CKD awareness
 - If hosting event in clinic, focus on WKD theme include educational materials about heart disease and how patients can protect their heart.

🕒 *Next Steps:*

- There are plenty of educational materials available from our website and from our www.wkdaction.org, which you should have a log-in from eNewsletter or can generate on site.
- Please contact DPC if hosting an event to keep us in the loop and to get advice on how to proceed.
- Finally, please reach out to local vendors and business to see if they will sponsor your event and/or reach out to them or your dialysis facility to see if you can print materials for free. As a nonprofit, DPC has limited resources to be able to financially support your event. We will, but please try to print elsewhere first.
Thanks!