



Midwest Kidney Network



December 2025 E-Newsletter from ESRD Network 11

MKN Immunization Impact Award Due December 31st

Here at ESRD Network 11 we are excited to award facilities for their achievements in patient vaccination this year. If you have not done so already, please review the Immunization Impact Awards [flyer](#). Survey Monkey attestation is here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/G2Y2RV3>.

Please reach out to [Patrick Shannon](#) 651-644-7218 or [Claire Taylor-Schiller](#) 651-644-9877 ext. 113 with questions.



Quality Incentive Program (QIP) Performance Score Reports and Certificates



The final Performance Score Reports (PSRs) and Certificates (PSCs) are available now! Facilities should download and save copies of the PSR and PSC from the [QIP user interface](#) in EQRS. **Action required:** Facilities must post the Performance Score Certificates by December 4, 2025. Both the English and Spanish versions are required to be displayed in a prominent location visible to patients. If you haven't posted your facility's PSC yet, please do so as soon as possible.

2026 ESRD Prospective Payment System Final Rule

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that the ESRD Prospective Payment System (PPS) Final Rule was released on Thursday, November 20. This rule finalizes updates to the Medicare payment policies and the ESRD Quality Incentive Program (QIP). Some of the key changes to the QIP included in the final rule are:

- The Facility Commitment to Health Equity reporting measure is removed for Payment Year 2027.
- The two Social Drivers of Health reporting measures are removed for Payment Year 2027.
- The minimum Total Performance Score for Payment Year 2027 increased from 51 to 56.
- Twenty-three questions were removed from the ICH CAHPS measure for Payment Year 2028.

For more information, please see the [CY 2026 PPS Final Rule Fact Sheet](#).

You can also find the full Final Rule in the [Federal Register](#).



CMS Form Submission Plan for the Holidays



During the holiday season we tend to see a decrease with timeliness for submitting CMS 2728 & 2746 forms into EQRS; therefore, we wanted to share our new [CMS Form Submission Plan for the Holidays](#). We know (and hope) staff can take well-deserved time off over the holidays, so please use this guide to help you/your facility continue to submit your CMS 2728 & 2746 forms on time in EQRS.

If you need support with EQRS or submitting CMS forms, you are always encouraged to reach out to Alli at (651) 644-2911 or Aletha at (651) 644-5839!

Winter Emergency Preparedness

Dialysis patients need to prepare for winter by creating an emergency kit, staying informed about weather, and maintaining their health, which includes staying warm, staying hydrated but within fluid limits, and monitoring blood pressure. They should also have a plan for getting to appointments and know what to do in case of an emergency like a power outage or being unable to make a scheduled treatment.

Emergency preparedness

- **Stock up:** Keep at least 3 days/72 hours' worth of essential supplies, including food, water, and any necessary medications. For home dialysis patients, this may mean having up to two weeks or more of supplies on hand, especially for deliveries that could be delayed.
- **Emergency kit:** Assemble a first-aid kit and ensure you have warm clothing, blankets, and extra batteries for flashlights.
- **Emergency contact:** Have a designated emergency contact person and keep an updated list of your medications and doctors.
- **Power outages:** If you have home dialysis, check your utility companies to see if you can be placed on a priority restoration list. Be ready for potential power interruptions and consider starting treatments earlier if a storm is forecast.



Health and medical

- **Stay warm:** Wear light layers of clothing, ideally wool, to trap heat. Keep your home as warm as possible.
- **Monitor blood pressure:** Winter can cause blood pressure fluctuations. Check it regularly and have a plan in your emergency preparedness kit.
- **Hydration:** Dehydration is still a risk in winter. Drink enough fluids but stay within your daily fluid limit to avoid hospitalization. Good choices include water, warm water with lemon, and clear broths. Avoid sugary drinks and excessive caffeine, notes [Apollo 24|7](#).
- **Medications:** Be cautious with over-the-counter cold and flu medications, as some ingredients like ibuprofen are not suitable for people with kidney disease. Always consult your doctor or pharmacist for advice before taking new medications.

During severe weather

- **Contact your clinic:** If you will be late or cannot make a scheduled appointment due to weather, call your dialysis clinic as soon as possible.
- **Reschedule missed treatments:** Clinics will likely try to reschedule a missed treatment within 24 hours.
- **Seek emergency care:** If you miss two consecutive treatments or experience severe symptoms like chest pain, shortness of breath, or high blood pressure with a severe headache, go to the emergency room (ER) or call 911.

Other considerations

- **Travel:** Allow for extra travel time to your appointments due to potentially hazardous road conditions.
- **Diet:** Be prepared to follow your emergency diet guidelines if a widespread disaster occurs.

https://www.midwestkidneynetwork.org/files/emergency_preparedness_for_dialysis_patients.pdf



Midwest Kidney Network

Seasonal MKN Resources

The holiday season is upon us, and with it, holiday foods and fluids, missed treatments, and rising rates of respiratory illnesses. It is the time of the year where we see hospitalization and emergency department usage rates increase in our Network facilities. Now is the time to educate our patients on staying healthy through the holidays. Please see the following Network resources that you can print and share with patients to support your education efforts and reduce the risk of hospitalization! If you need extra support with your hospitalization rates or would like additional fluid management and infection prevention resources, please contact Claire at the Network for additional support claire.taylor-schiller@midwestkidneynetwork.org:

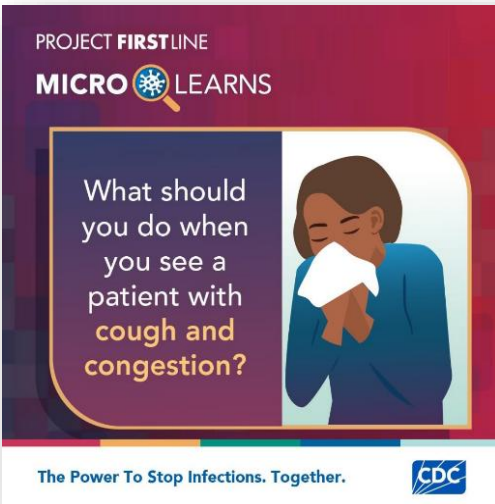
- [Kidney Concerns Newsletter](#)
- [Healthy for the Holidays](#)
- [Stoplight for Sepsis](#)
- [CDC - Infection Prevention is in Your Hands](#)



Minnesota Dept of Health – Project Firstline

Cough Micro-Learn: What to Do When You See a Patient with Cough and Congestion

Join MDH Project Firstline's brief train-the-trainer session designed for those with infection control expertise or those who may lead infection prevention and control education. Participants will learn how to utilize micro-learn resources in team huddles, guide practical discussions, and help staff take steps to stop the spread of germs.



Train to lead. Use the tools. Make an impact.

Same training offered both days — register for the one that fits your schedule.

- Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2025 | 2 - 2:30 p.m. CST
[Project Firstline Cough and Congestion Micro-Learn \(12/9\)](#)
- Thursday, Dec. 11, 2025 | 10 - 10:30 a.m. CST
[Project Firstline Cough and Congestion Micro-Learn \(12/11\)](#)

View Now: MDH Project Firstline Cough Education Bundle

Train your health care team on what to do when they see a patient/resident/client with cough and congestion by using our newest educational resource: [MDH Project Firstline Cough Education Bundle \(PDF\)](#)

MKN Holiday Schedule

Our office will be closed and our staff will not be available in observance of the following holidays:

- **December 24th – Christmas Eve**
- **December 25th – Christmas Day**
- **January 1st – New Years Day**

