

# Kidney Concerns

News for Kidney Patients and Their Families

Spring 2016

Informed, Empowered, Engaged

## In this issue...

We have a new name and a new look! Renal Network 11 is now Midwest Kidney Network.



**Midwest  
Kidney Network**

Although we have changed our name, we have not changed our staff, our location, our contact information, or our commitment to improving care for kidney patients!

In this edition of *Kidney Concerns* we will talk about an important survey you will be given and explain why it is important that you take the time to complete it.

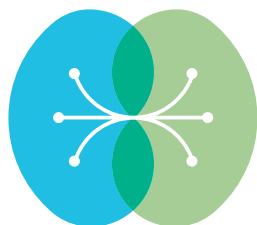
The In-Center Hemodialysis Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (ICH-CAHPS) survey measures the experiences of people receiving in-center hemodialysis care from Medicare-certified dialysis facilities.

Why is it important? The results of this survey determine which things your unit is doing well and which areas need improvement. It is important that EVERYONE answer the survey – not just those with a problem to report. The positive as well as the negative give a complete picture of your dialysis facility. Your honest feedback will help dialysis providers improve the quality of care provided to all patients.

We will also highlight some ways for you to protect your health, to become actively involved in your care, and help other kidney patients!

*Maggie Carey,*

**Consumer Committee Chair**



**Midwest  
Kidney Network**

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# Informed, Empowered, Engaged

## Patient Voice

### Sheila Maybanks, MSW

It is no secret that people who are interested and engaged in their treatment feel better and have more control over their lives. Also no secret, dialysis treatments do take time. Why not use some of that time to help you and other get more involved?

- Attend your care conferences! Invite family members and caregivers.
- Consider being a peer mentor to other patients; especially people new to dialysis. Ask your social worker for resources to learn about training to be a peer mentor.
- Volunteer to be a facility greeter. You could help others feel comfortable, answer questions and show them around.
- Talk to your facility social worker or manager about short educational programs in the lobby. These events can be helpful for family members too.
- Start a patient and family member support group. You can share your knowledge and learn from the experience of others.

Dialysis staff may be good resources for ideas and support. Everyone benefits when patients are informed, empowered, and engaged!

# Your Voice Matters: Information about the ICH-CAHPS Survey

ICH-CAHPS stands for In-Center Hemodialysis Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems. It is a semi-annual survey that asks about your experience at your dialysis facility. Your responses are gathered by a third party and are strictly confidential.

## Why is it important?

CMS (Medicare & Medicaid) and ESRD Networks (like Midwest Kidney Network) use the information you provide in the following ways.

- Identify the areas that your facility can improve to make patients feel more comfortable.
- Improve patient-provider communication.
- Hold facilities accountable for their actions and outcomes.

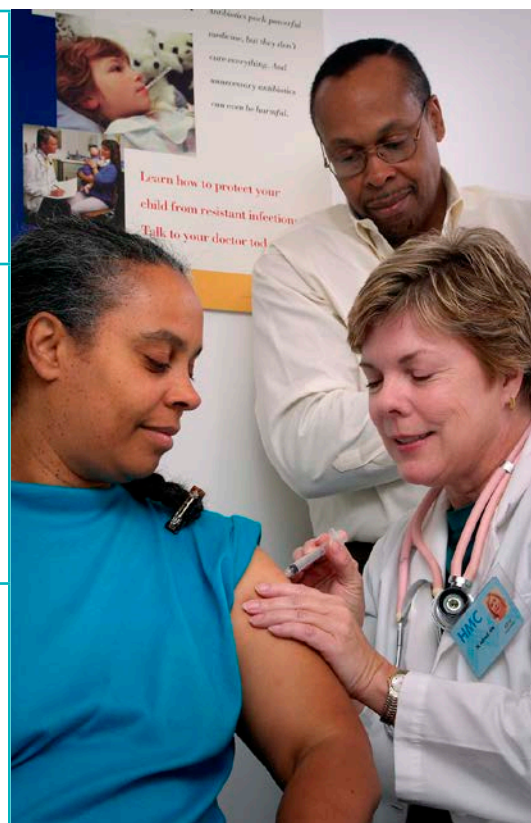
In the future, this information will let the public know how well (or poorly) a facility provides care. You may receive the survey through the mail or by telephone. We encourage you to take the time to complete the ICH-CAHPS survey so that facilities can improve dialysis care for you and for others.



## Vaccines Protect You and Your Loved Ones

All patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD) have a lowered resistance to infections. Having a lowered resistance makes it easier to develop diseases that can make you very sick. Vaccines lower your chance of getting and spreading certain diseases and disease complications. Vaccines are one of the safest ways to protect your health. Talk to your healthcare team in the dialysis unit or at your doctor's office. They will discuss what you need and let you know how to receive the vaccinations.

	Why?	When?
<b>Influenza (Flu)</b>	The Flu is a lung infection that may lead to hospitalization and pneumonia. It can be easily spread to others.	Flu vaccinations are given once each year, usually in the late summer or early fall.
<b>Hepatitis B</b>	Hepatitis B is a liver disease that is no longer as common due in large part to the development of a Hepatitis B vaccine. Not receiving this vaccination could lead to a new outbreak of the disease.	Hepatitis B vaccination is given in 3 or 4 injections over the course of 6-8 months. Boosters may be given depending on how well patients respond to the vaccine.
<b>Pneumonia</b>	About 400,000 people are hospitalized each year due to pneumonia, and 5-7% of those people die from the disease.	Two vaccines can help to prevent pneumonia. They are given in two different injections, usually 8 weeks apart.



# What to Do if You Have a Concern or Grievance

## Developed by the National Kidney Patient Advisory Council

What happens if you as an End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) patient have a concern about a situation, event, or condition? You may choose from any of the following options.



### Know your Patient Rights and Responsibilities

You can request a copy of your rights and responsibilities from your facility. Knowing these will help prepare you for any steps you take in the Grievance Process.

### Speak to individual members of your care team

Make an appointment to speak with the facility administrator, the social worker, or your nephrologist in a private setting where your concerns will be discussed in a confidential manner

### Attend/Request a Patient Care Plan Meeting

Each facility is required to hold periodic patient care plan meetings with each patient. During the meeting you and your medical team can express concerns and work together towards resolution.

### File a Complaint with Your Facility

Become familiar with your facility's policy on addressing complaints and grievances. Members of the facility's administrative team will work to address your issues and concerns.

### Contact Midwest Kidney Network

You may feel that your grievance has not been adequately addressed at your ESRD facility. Or you may choose to not use the facility's grievance process. If so, then you may file a grievance with the Network.

You have several options at the Network level. You may switch options at any time or completely withdraw your request for assistance.

- Confidential Consultation
- Immediate Advocacy
- Quality of Care Review
- Referral

**1-800-973-3773**



### Contact Your State Survey Agency

State Survey Agencies also monitor ESRD facilities to make sure they meet Medicare Standards. Both the Network and the State Survey Agencies receive and investigate complaints.

Your State Survey Agency is especially well equipped to respond to concerns about patient safety and infection control.

**MICHIGAN: 1-800-882-6006**

**MINNESOTA 1-800-369-7994**

**NORTH DAKOTA 1-701-328-2352**

**SOUTH DAKOTA 1-800-738-2301**

**WISCONSIN 1-800-642-6552**