

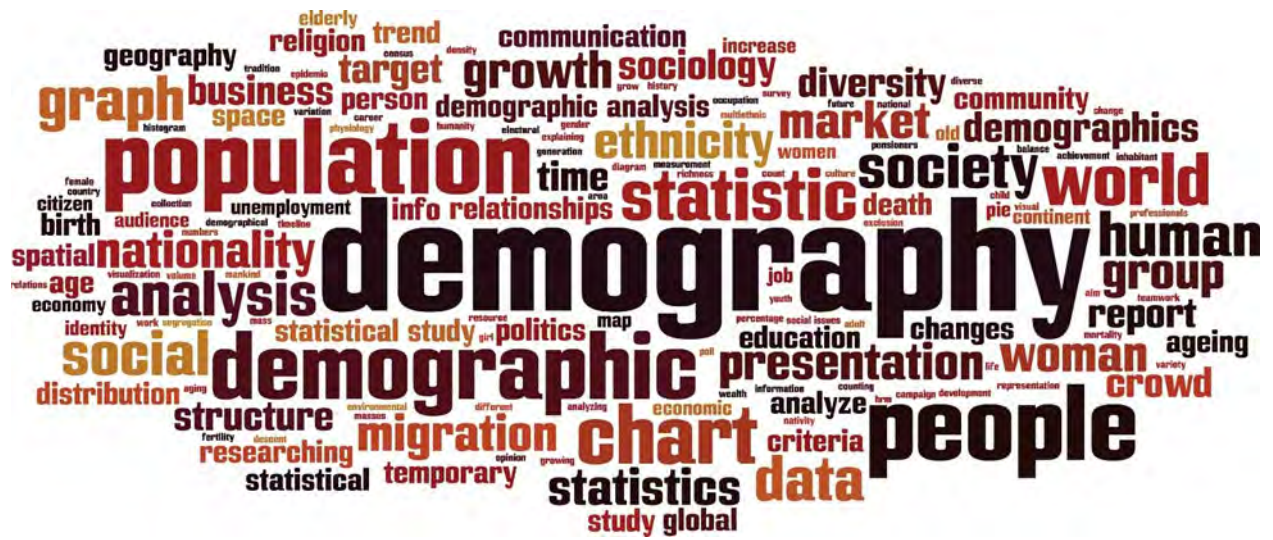
ESRD NETWORK 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

This report will cover quality improvement efforts led by ESRD Network 11 from January 1, 2021 – May 31, 2021, and the Base Year of Task Order Number 75FCMC21F0001, June 1, 2021 – April 30, 2022

ESRD Network 11

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ESRD DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Midwest Kidney Network (End Stage Renal Disease Network 11)

Midwest Kidney Network (MKN) is an independent, nonprofit organization working to assess and improve the care of people with kidney disease. We serve a five-state region: Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Geography and Population Density

Our service area covers more than 350,000 square miles and spans three time zones. More than 23 million people live in this five-state region. About 70% reside in the metropolitan areas of Detroit, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis-Saint Paul, while about 30% reside in rural areas.

Diverse Populations

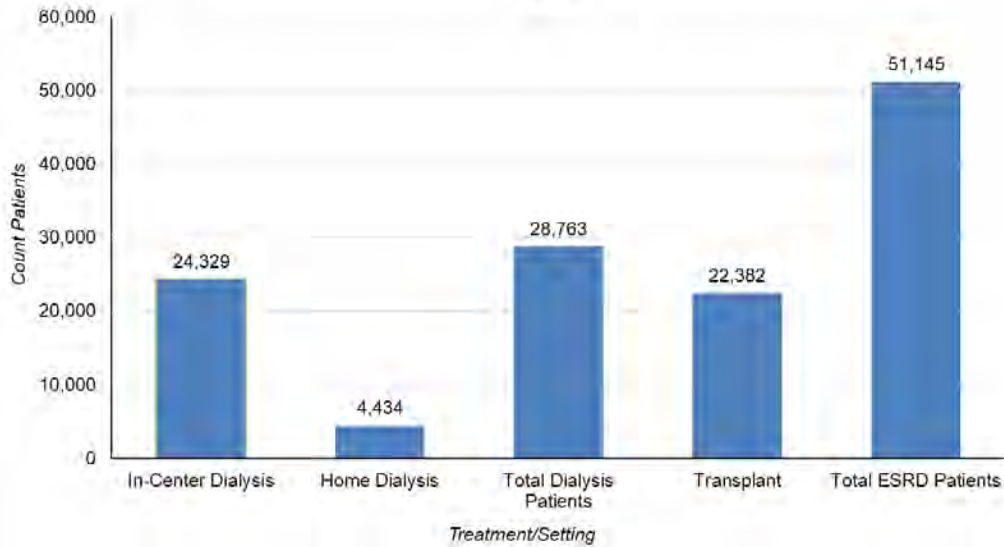
The following are notable points about the population in our five-state region as African Americans and Native Americans have a disproportionately higher incidence of kidney disease.

- At 83%, Detroit, Michigan has the second highest percentage of African American population in a US city.
- Midwest Kidney Network's five-state area contains more than fifteen Native American reservations with some of the largest populations in the United States. Over 10% of the population of South Dakota identifies as American Indian or Alaskan Native making it the state with the 4th highest percentage of Native American population in the US.

End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) in Midwest Kidney Network Region

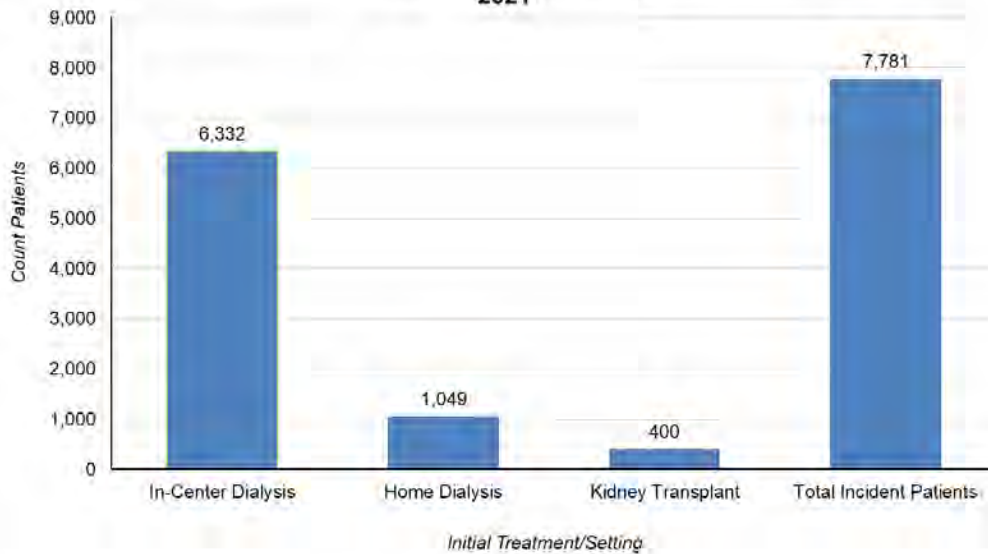
Midwest Kidney Network collaborates with 557 ESRD providers. Of the dialysis providers in this 5-state region, 39% are affiliated with DaVita, 34% are affiliated with FMC, 12% are affiliated with a regional chain, and 15% are independent.

Network 11: Count of Prevalent ESRD Patients by Treatment/Setting 2021



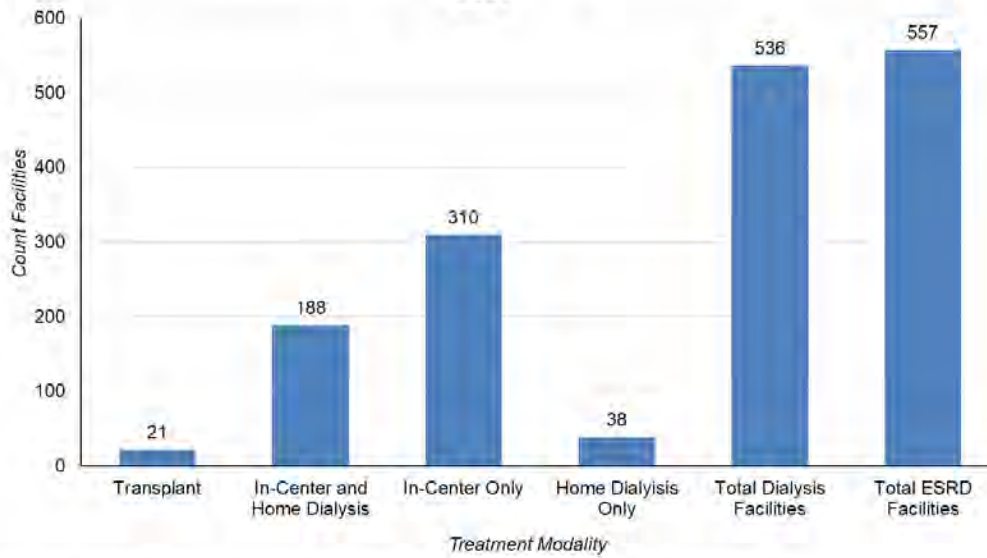
Total Dialysis Patients = In-Center Dialysis + Home Dialysis
 Total ESRD Patients = Transplant + Total Dialysis
 SNF dialysis patients are not shown due to small numbers.
 Source of data: EQRS May 2022

Network 11: Count of Incident ESRD Patients by Initial Treatment/Setting 2021



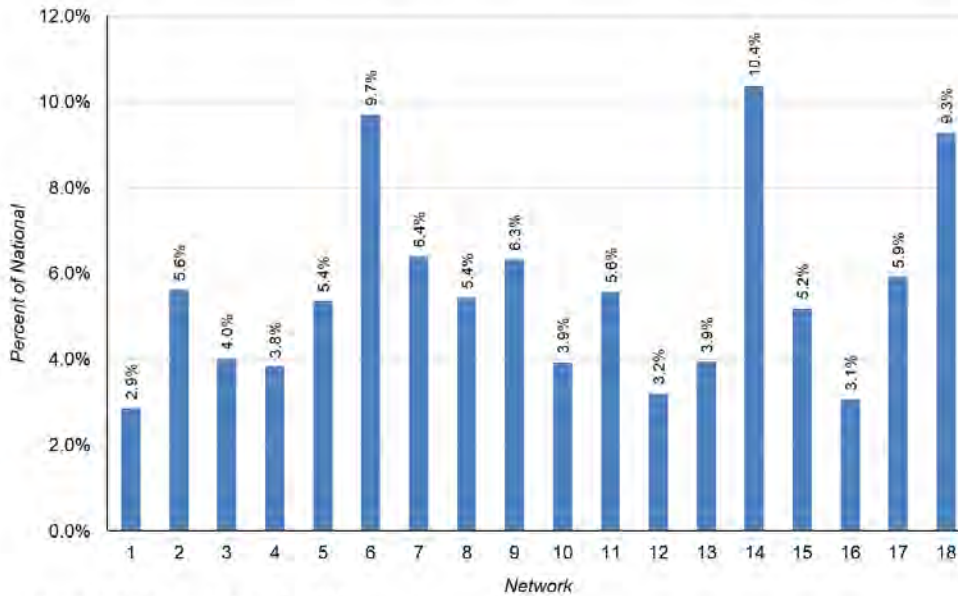
Total Incident = Patients In-Center + Home + Kidney Transplant
 Source of data: EQRS May 2022

Network 11: Count of Medicare-Certified Facilities by Treatment/Setting 2021



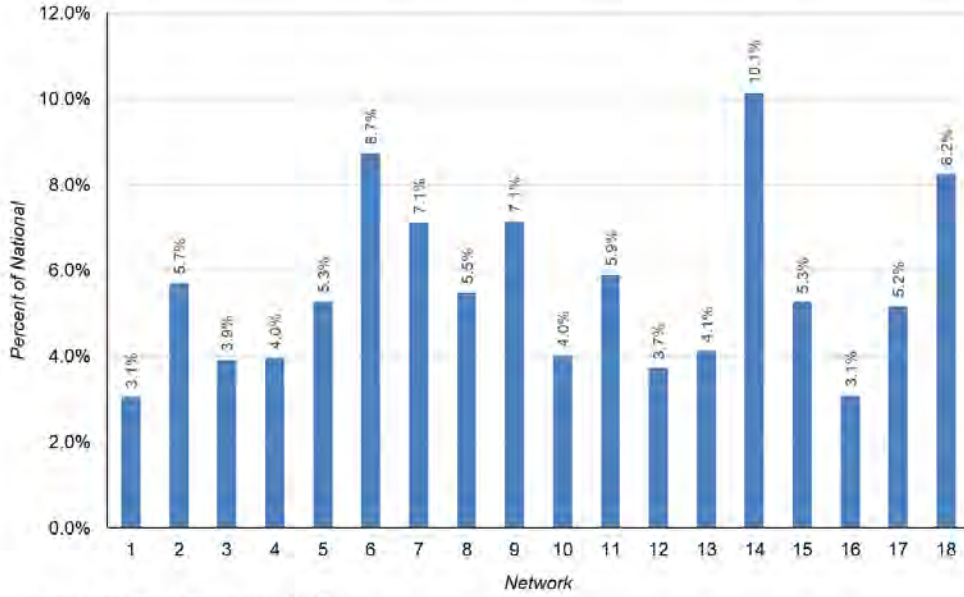
Total Dialysis Facilities = In-Center and Home Dialysis + Home Dialysis Only + In-Center Only
 Total ESRD Facilities = Transplant + Total Dialysis Facilities
 Source of data: EQRS May 2022

Percent of National Prevalent Dialysis Patients by ESRD Network 2021



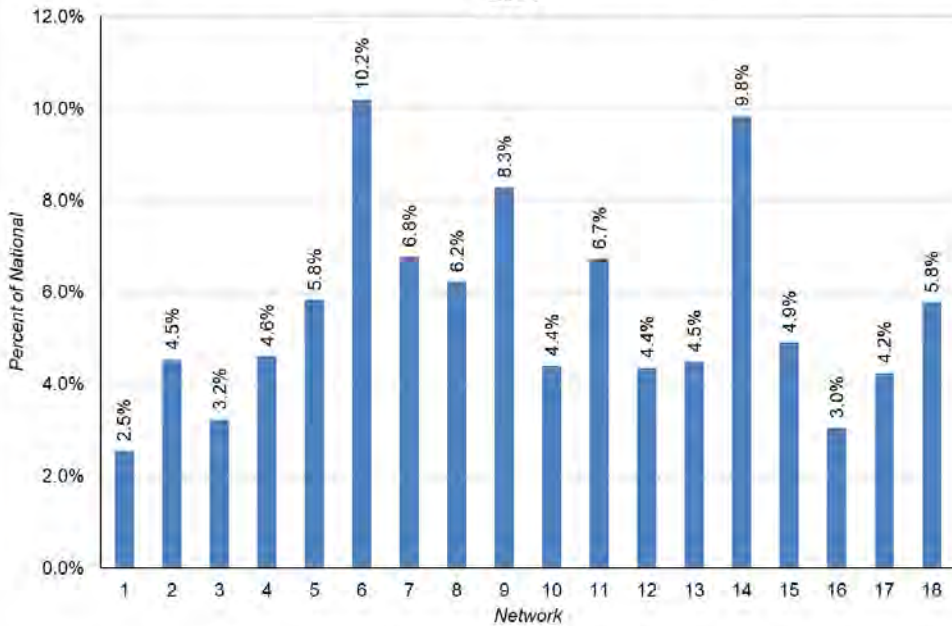
National total dialysis patients: 516,929
 Source of data: EQRS May 2022

**Percent of National Incident Dialysis Patients by ESRD Network
2021**



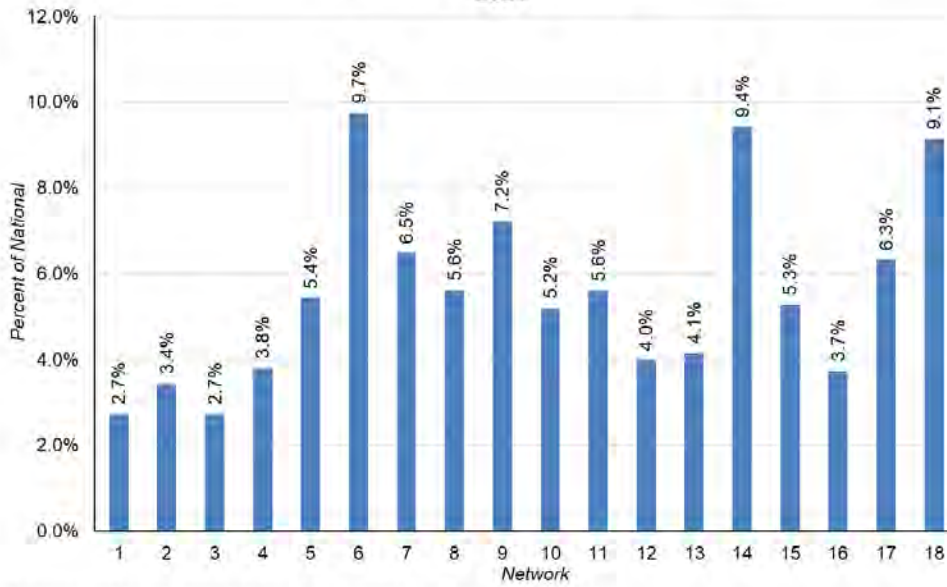
National total incident patients: 132,071
Source of data: EQRS May 2022

**Percent of Medicare-Certified Dialysis Facilities by ESRD Network
2021**



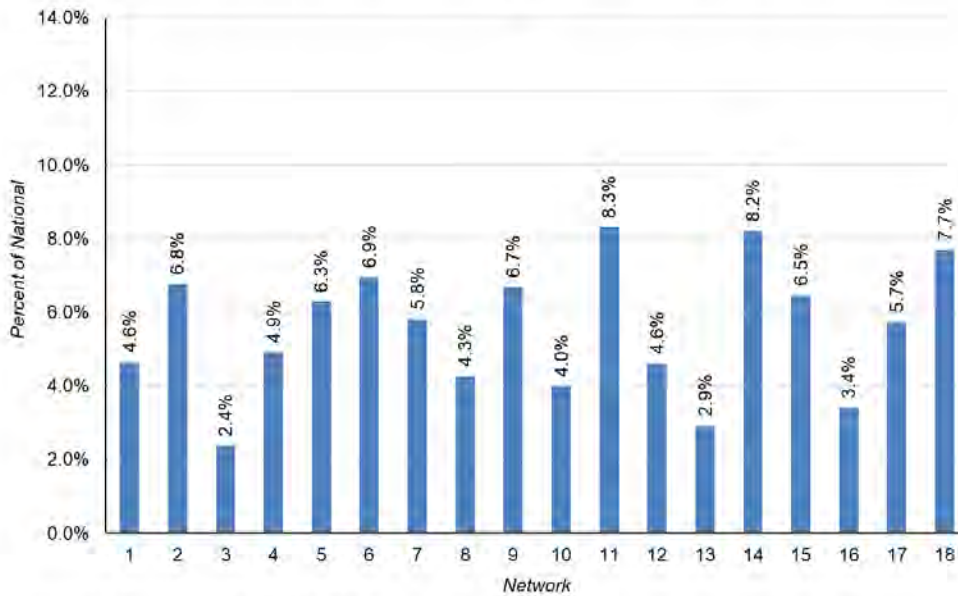
National total ESRD Medicare-certified dialysis facilities: 7,969
Source of data: EQRS May 2022

Percent of National Home Hemodialysis and Peritoneal Dialysis Patients by ESRD Network 2021



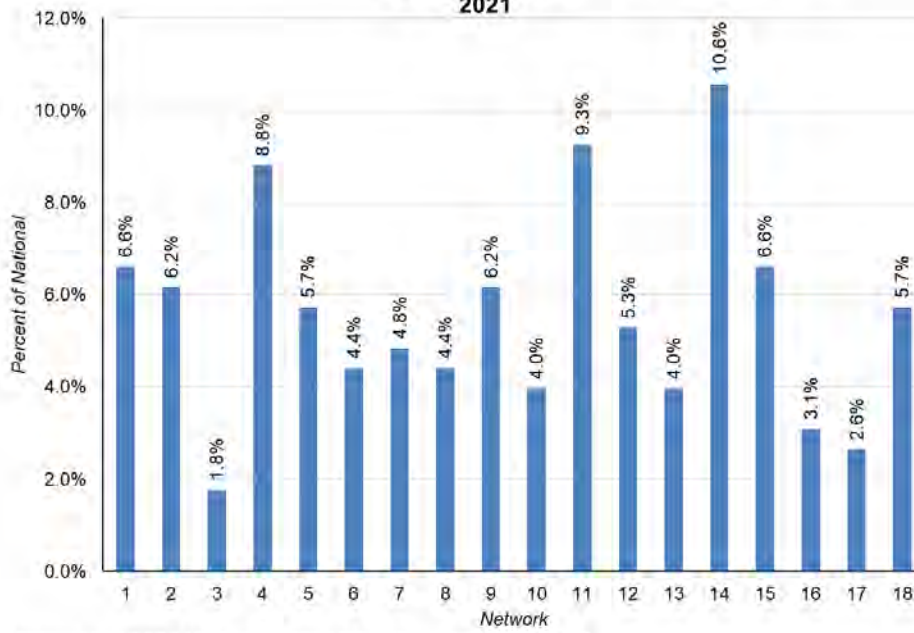
National total home hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis patients: 79,071
 Source of data: EQRS May 2022

Percent of National Transplant Patients by ESRD Network 2021



National total transplant patients: 269,424
 Source of data: EQRS May 2022

Percent of Medicare-Certified Kidney Transplant Facilities by ESRD Network 2021



National total ESRD Medicare-certified kidney transplant facilities: 227
 Source of data: EQRS May 2022

ESRD NETWORK GRIEVANCE AND ACCESS TO CARE DATA

Network Goals

January – May 2021:

- Increase patient awareness of the Network as an educational resource and mediator for grievances with metrics included in the Network Internal Quality Improvement plan.

June 2021 – April 2022:

- Increase patient awareness of the Network as an educational resource and mediator for grievances with metrics included in the Network Internal Quality Improvement plan.
- Improve the patient experience of care by resolving grievances and access to care issues.

Responding to Patient's Concerns

From January 2021 through April 2022, the Midwest Kidney Network responded to 72 calls from patients and provided support, strategies, options, and assistance. Midwest Kidney Network staff were intentional in their individualized customer service and incorporated the following best practices into their discussions with patients:

- Explained the grievance process and what Midwest Kidney Network can do to address their grievance.
- Reassured callers that their concern was important to us. Collaborated with patient on a plan and sought their permission and agreement to move forward.
- Sent grievance letters to patients summarizing their grievance process.

To educate patients and families, Midwest Kidney Network distributed brochures describing the role of the Network and the grievance process including the option for filing anonymous grievances.

Working with Dialysis Providers with Concerns

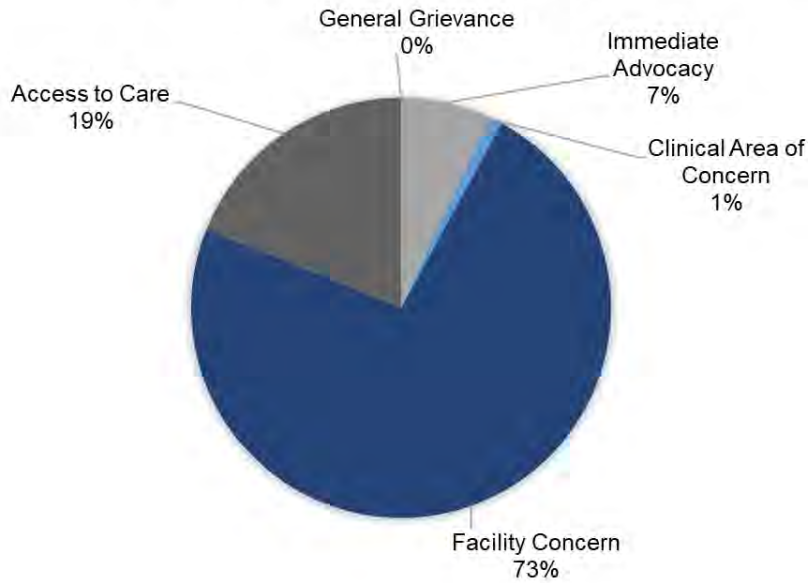
In the same time period, Midwest Kidney Network received 502 calls from facilities/providers. These facilities represent the diversity of urban/rural, inner city/suburban, Large Dialysis Organization facilities, and independent dialysis facilities. Midwest Kidney Network responded to calls from dialysis facilities by aiding in problem solving, sharing best practices, and helping to understand the Medicare Conditions for Coverage as it applies to grievances.

Results

During this 16-month time period, Midwest Kidney Network responded to a total of 574 concerns filed by patients and facility personnel. Calls included:

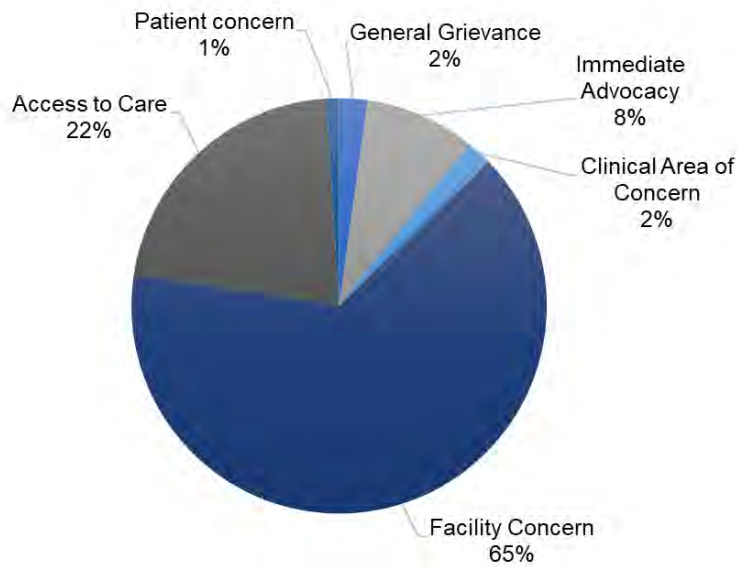
- Facility Concerns 405
- Access to Care Issues 97
- Immediate Advocacy 50
- Quality of Care issues 10
- General Grievances 8
- Patient Concerns 4

Network 11: Percent of Jan-May 2021 Grievances and Non-Grievances by Case Type



Source of data: Patient Contact Utility (PCU) accessed April 2022

Network 11: Percent of Jun 2021-Apr 2022 Grievances and Non-Grievances by Case Type



Source of data: Patient Contact Utility (PCU) accessed May 2022



Transplant Waitlist Quality Improvement Activity through May 2021

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic limiting provider staffing and procedures, along with contract goal adjustments, the Network worked toward the goals of the following quality improvement activities but was not evaluated on results through May 2021. The new contract June 2021-April 2022 the Networks focused on Quality Improvement Goals.

Network Goal

Achieve an increase in the rate of patients added to the transplant waiting list in the Network service area by at least 1.25% using the ABC™ model. The transplant waitlist project had a baseline rate of 2.56% with a goal of increasing to a rate of 2.62%.

Project Participants

All 511 facilities in the Network 11 region as well as 21 transplant centers participated in the project. Midwest Kidney Network also worked with the region's 4 Organ Procurement Organizations to support insight into common goals and strategies.

Patient Engagement

Patients subject matter experts provided input into the project shape and direction through participation on the transplant advisory committee, evaluating project activities and sharing their expertise and experience through the Consumer committee.

Interventions

Midwest Kidney Network incorporated a variety of strategic interventions to optimize working relationships between dialysis facilities and kidney transplant centers to enhance communication and support for referral and movement through the transplant waitlist. High performing facility best practices were shared to support patient education and patient transition from transplant referral to transplant waitlist. Results-oriented interventions included the following activities.

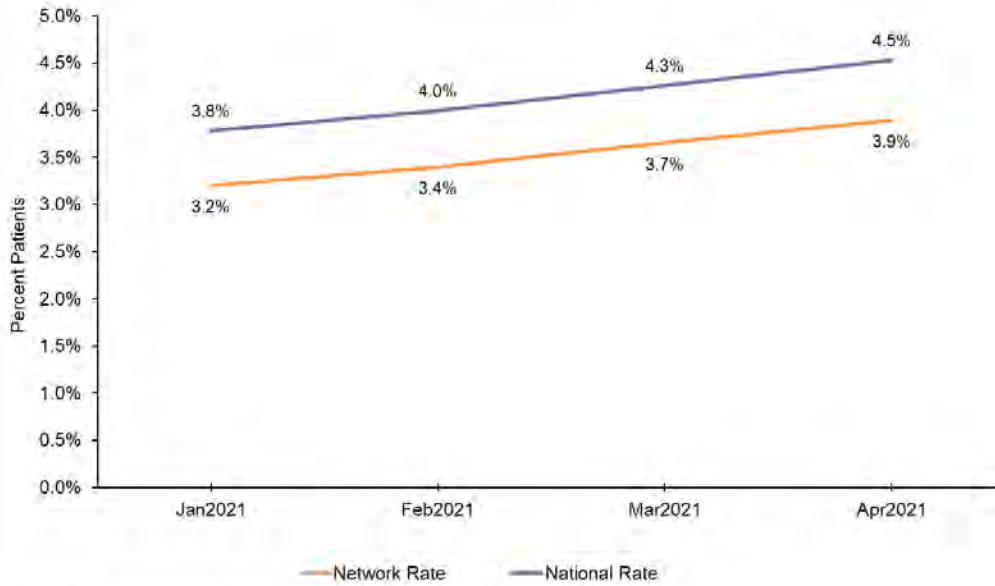
- Change package concepts were used as a foundation with focus on cohort of 20 facilities, as well as shared with all facilities in the Network 11 region.
- Supported increasing communication through:
 - the encouragement of transplant staff attendance at dialysis facility Quality Assurance & Performance Improvement meetings (QAPI) or regularly scheduled calls,
 - and sharing reports for patient status review between transplant staff and dialysis staff.

- We identified low, middle, and high performing facilities to tailor interventions and provide facility-specific technical assistance.
 - Technical assistance was conducted to identify select low performers and provide 1:1 coaching to identify barriers and provide interventions.
 - Technical assistance calls to facilities to identify challenges and successful practices with mid performing facilities.
 - Convened calls with high performing facilities to identify best practices.
- Network 11 staff hosted a quarterly transplant advisory group including dialysis social workers, nurses, transplant surgeons, transplant coordinators, and patient subject matter experts to identify challenges and best practices and recommend process changes.
- Regularly scheduled calls with Organ Procurement Organizations and the Midwest Kidney Network collaboration action group to identify common goals and strategies for improvement.
- Shared National Coordinating Center (NCC) resources on Transplant education for patients.
- Identified and shared best practices nationally.
- Utilized ESRD NCC resources and tools to support kidney transplantation and waitlisting.
- Collaborated with University of Wisconsin Transplant Center on a presentation on the importance of Communication between Transplant Centers and Dialysis facilities. We connected transplant center coordinators with transplant liaisons in the dialysis facilities to establish processes for frequent communication about patient status.
- Midwest Kidney Network utilized Power Point presentations and webinars on demand to make all education and resources more accessible to all staff.

Results

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a nationwide flattening of the number of patients added to the kidney transplant waitlist during the middle of 2020. By April 2021, Midwest Kidney Network's rate of patients added to the kidney transplant waitlist rate progressed to 3.89%, exceeding the goal of 2.62%.

**Network 11: Percent of Patients Added to the Transplant Waitlist
January 2021 - April 2021**



QIA: Quality Improvement Activity
Source of data: ESRD NCC TXQIA accessed May 2021

Transplant Waitlist & Transplanted Quality Improvement Activity

June 2021 - April 2022

Network Goals

Achieve an increase in the number of patients added to the transplant waiting list in the Network service area by at least 2%. Achieve a 2% increase in the number of patients receiving a kidney transplant by the end of the base period

Project Participants

Project participants in the 2021-2022 project included 535 dialysis and 21 transplant centers with a cohort focus group of approximately 50 dialysis facilities consisting of mid-level performers. Midwest Kidney Network also worked with low performers providing technical assistance, and high performers provided best practices to share.

Patient Engagement

Patients subject matter experts provided input into the project shape and direction through participation on the transplant advisory committee, evaluating project activities and sharing their expertise and experience through the Consumer Committee. Patient SMEs also worked on educational tools related to modality education and transplant, including a plan for short videos to comment on short comments on their experience with transplantation to be shared virtually.

Health Equity

Midwest Kidney Network analyzed and reviewed data on disparities in transplantation, identifying key areas for improvement. The Network reviewed topics with the transplant advisory group and identified topics for focus and strategies that addressed race, language, myths and socio-economic issues. The Network surveyed dialysis facilities and transplant centers for feedback on these topics as well and incorporate them into shaping the project.

Two Network 11 patient subject matter experts were invited to present at the 2022 CMS Quality Conference on disparity, with one focusing on transplantation and mentoring.

Interventions

Midwest Kidney Network incorporated a variety of strategic interventions to enhance working relationships between dialysis facilities and kidney transplant centers. We promoted best practices to support patient education and patient transition from transplant referral to transplant waitlist. Results-oriented interventions included the following activities.

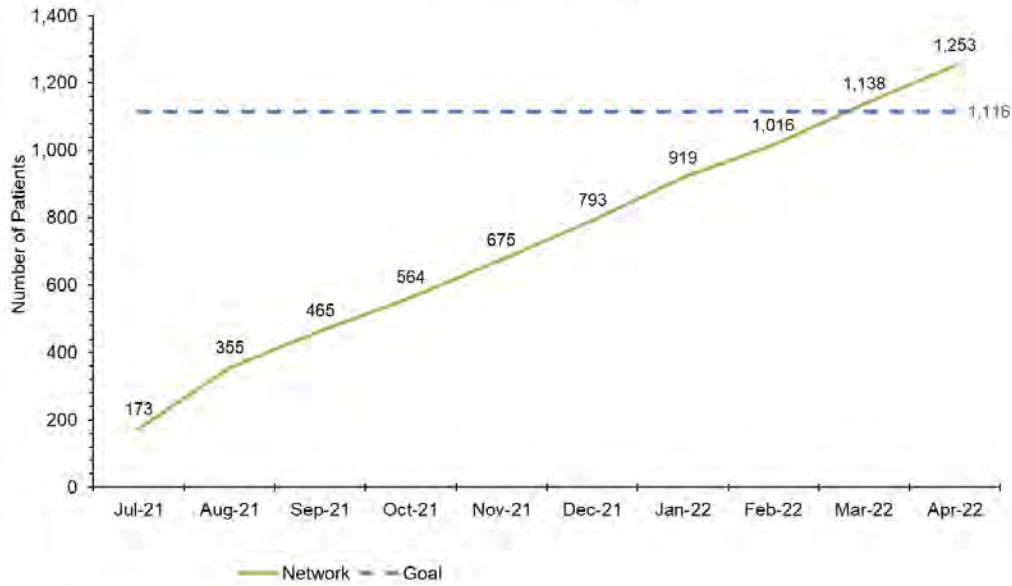
- Change package concepts were used as a foundation with a focus on a cohort of 25 facilities. The change package was shared with all facilities in the Network 11 region as well.

- We identified low, middle, and high performing facilities to tailor interventions and provide facility-specific technical assistance.
- Technical assistance was conducted to identify select low performers and provide 1:1 coaching to identify barriers and strategies for mitigation.
- Supported increasing communication through:
 - the encouragement of transplant staff attendance at dialysis facility Quality Assurance & Performance Improvement meetings (QAPI) or regularly scheduled calls,
 - and sharing reports for patient status review between transplant staff and dialysis staff.
- Convened calls with high performing facilities to share best practices.
- Midwest Kidney Network staff convened a transplant advisory group including dialysis social workers, nurses, transplant surgeons, transplant coordinators, and patient subject matter experts to identify challenges and best practices and recommend process changes.
- Regularly scheduled calls with Organ Procurement Organizations and the Network 11 collaboration action group to identify common goals and strategies for improvement.
- Shared National Coordinating Center (NCC) resources with facilities in the Network 11 region.
- Identified and shared best practices nationally.
- Utilized ESRD NCC resources and tools to support kidney transplantation and waitlisting
- Collaborated with University of Wisconsin Transplant Center on Living Donation and Kidney allocation.
- Midwest Kidney Network utilized Power Point presentations and webinars on demand to make all education more accessible to all staff.

Results

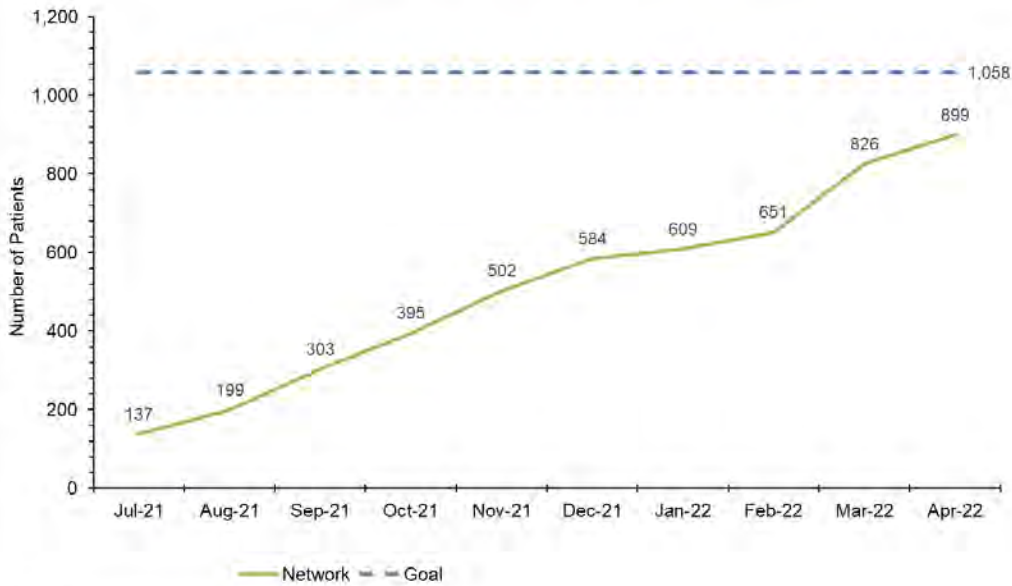
From June 2021 through April 2022, 1253 patients in the Midwest Kidney Network region were added to the kidney transplant waitlist, exceeding the goal of 1116 patients. The number of patients in the Network 11 region who received a kidney transplant progressed to 899, working toward the goal of 1058.

Network 11: Patients Added to a Kidney Transplant Waiting List
July 2021 - April 2022



QIA: Quality Improvement Activity
Source of data: ESRD NCC accessed May 2022

Network 11: Patients Receiving a Kidney Transplant
July 2021 - April 2022



QIA: Quality Improvement Activity
Source of data: ESRD NCC accessed May 2022

Home Therapy Quality Improvement Activity through May 2021

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic limiting provider staffing and procedures, along with contract goal adjustments, the Network worked toward the goals of the following quality improvement activities but was not evaluated on results through May 2021. The new contract June 2021-April 2022 the Networks focused on Quality Improvement Goals.

Network Goal

Achieve an increase in the rate of patients that begin training for a home modality in the Network service area by at least 2.5% using the ABC™ model. The home dialysis project had a baseline rate of 5.23% with a goal of increasing to a rate of 5.58%.

Project Participants

The 2021 project included all dialysis facilities in the Midwest Kidney Network region.

Patient Engagement

Patients across the Midwest Kidney Network service area shaped the direction of this project by supporting the development of educational tools and interventions. Patients helped identify key focus areas such as ongoing modality education and sharing patient experiences with each modality choice. The Network 11 Consumer Committee developed the patient-centered booklet ***My Life, My Choice*** to share patient specific experiences with different modalities including home hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis.

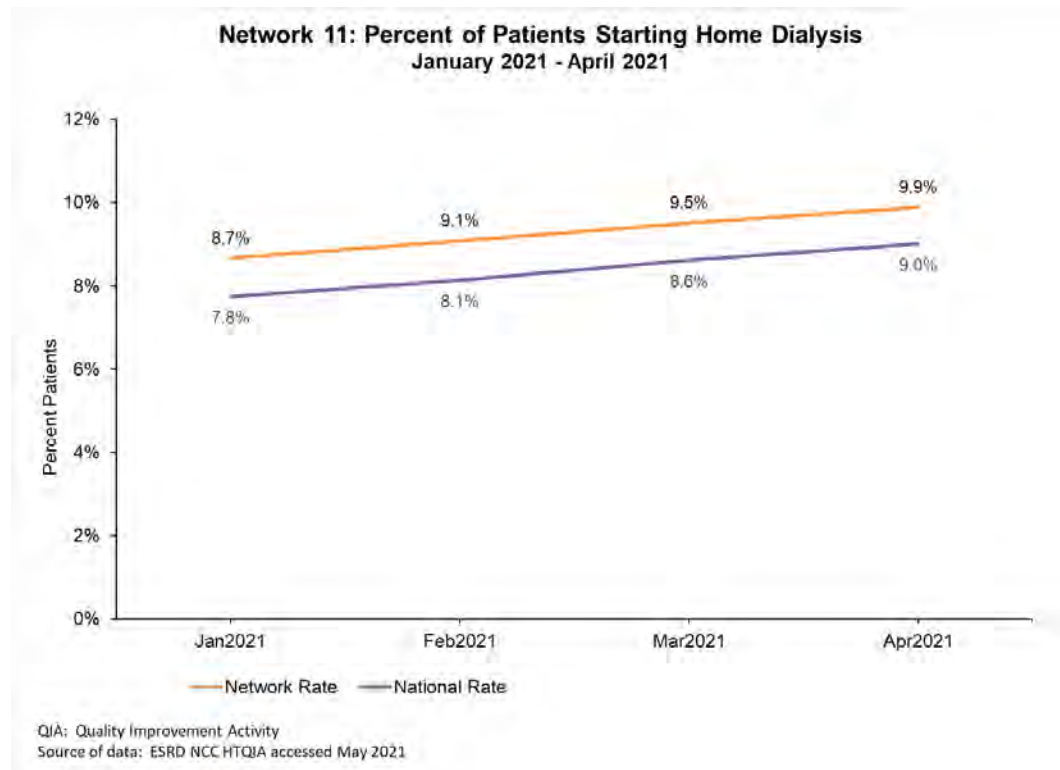
Interventions

- We developed a short educational email for dialysis providers that explained the project goals and objectives, educational events, and expectations for dialysis facilities.
- We promoted early modality education for patients through on demand presentations due to the pandemic's effect on staffing in dialysis units.
- Midwest Kidney Network staff hosted a home modality advisory group to review the Home Dialysis Change package and to develop interventions and education to encourage home dialysis modalities.
- Through collaboration, we incorporated patient perspectives into actionable strategies. These included short videos and printed materials that focused less on clinical information and more on the patient experience.
- We promoted the value of telemedicine for both urban and rural patients by creating a ***Telemedicine Tip Sheet***. We shared this resource on the **Network 11 COVID-19 webpage** and via Facebook.

- We promoted patient-created educational resources from the ESRD National Coordinating Center and other stakeholders.

Results

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Midwest Kidney Network met the home dialysis goal by September 2020. Data for this measure wasn't available from January to May of 2021, but the percent of patients starting home dialysis during that time period increased from 8.7% to 9.9% and exceeded the national average.



Home Therapy Quality Improvement Activity

June 2021 - April 2022

Network Goals

Increase the number of incident ESRD patients starting dialysis using a home modality by at least 10%, from a baseline of 1011 patients to a goal of 1113 patients. Increase the number of prevalent ESRD patients moving to a home modality by at least 2%, from a baseline of 1814 patients to a goal of 1851 patients.

Project Participants

The 2021-2022 project included all dialysis facilities in the Midwest Kidney Network region.

Patient Engagement and Health Equity

Patients across the Network 11 service area shaped the direction of this project by supporting the development of educational tools and interventions. Patients helped identify key focus areas such as ongoing modality education and sharing patient experiences with each modality choice. The Network 11 Consumer Committee developed the patient-centered booklet **My Life, My Choice** to share patient specific experiences with different modalities including home hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis. We included the topic of health inequities in choosing home dialysis.

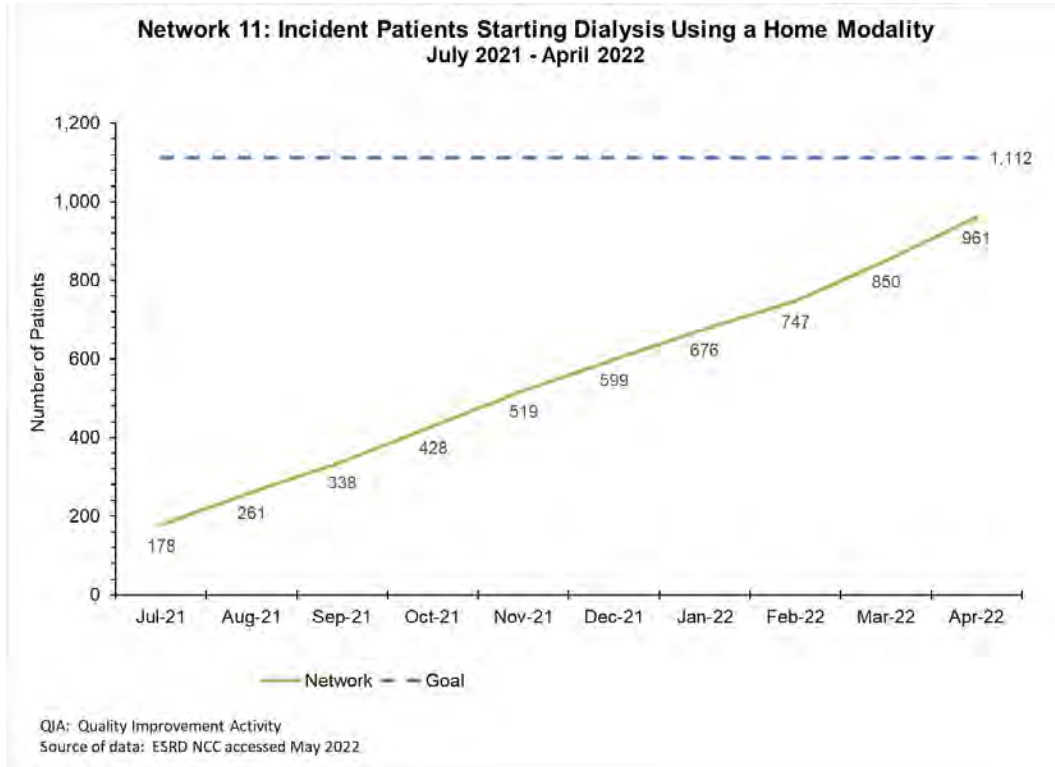
Interventions

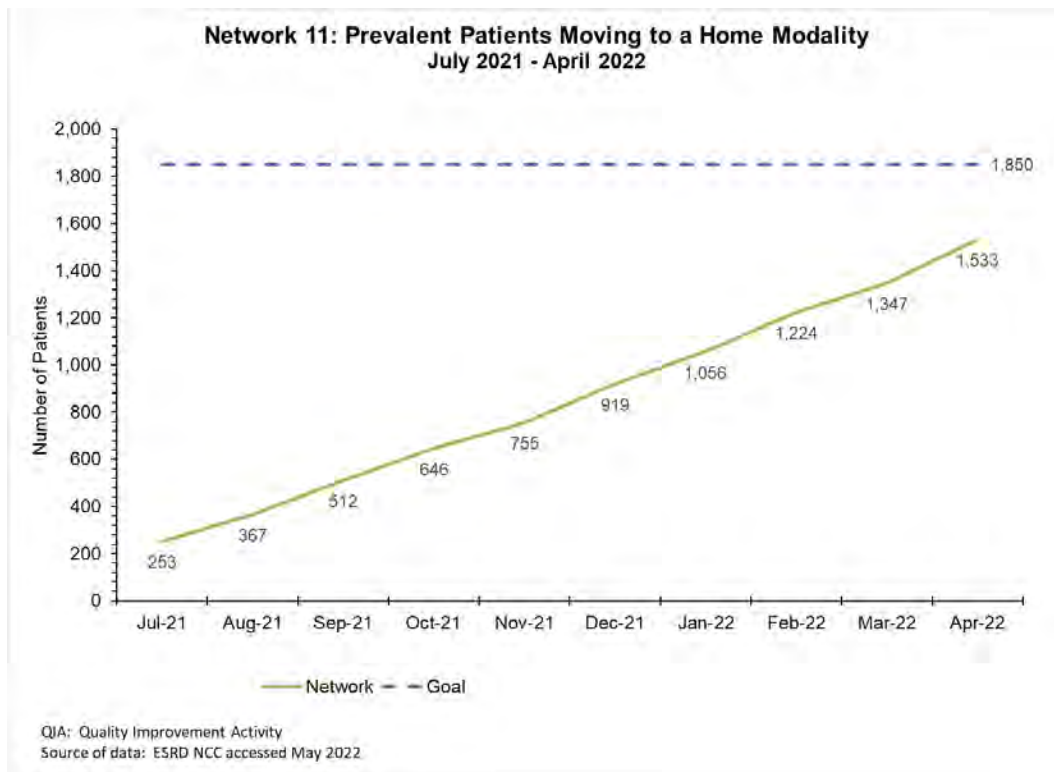
- We developed a coalition of high performing experts to guide the planning and development of interventions for the project. The coalition included empowered patients, nephrologists, nurses in home dialysis and incenter hemodialysis units, providers of home dialysis in skilled nursing facilities, local experts, social workers, and educators.
- We immediately identified low, middle, and high performing facilities to tailor interventions and provide facility-specific technical assistance.
- We utilized the Home Dialysis Change Package in development of strategies for the project.
- We promoted patient-created educational resources from the ESRD National Coordinating Center and other stakeholders.
- We promoted the value of telemedicine for both urban and rural patients by creating a **Telemedicine Tip Sheet**. We shared this resource on the **Network 11 COVID-19 webpage** and via Facebook.

Results

From June 2021 through April of 2022, 961 incident patients in the Network 11 region started dialysis using a home modality, working towards the goal of 1113 patients. From June 2021

through April of 2022, 1533 in-center dialysis patients moved to a home modality, working towards the goal of 1851 patients. And 359 rural home dialysis patients used telemedicine, working towards the goal of 372 patients.





Influenza June 2021 - April 2022

Network Goal

Ensure a minimum of 85% of dialysis patients receive an influenza vaccination.

Project Participants

The 2021-2022 project included all dialysis facilities in the Midwest Kidney Network region.

Patient Engagement and Health Equity

Patients across the Network 11 service area shaped the direction of this project by supporting the development of educational tools and interventions. Patients helped identify key focus areas such as resources on disparities, participation in the Midwest Kidney Network Advisory Groups and on the Consumer Committee.

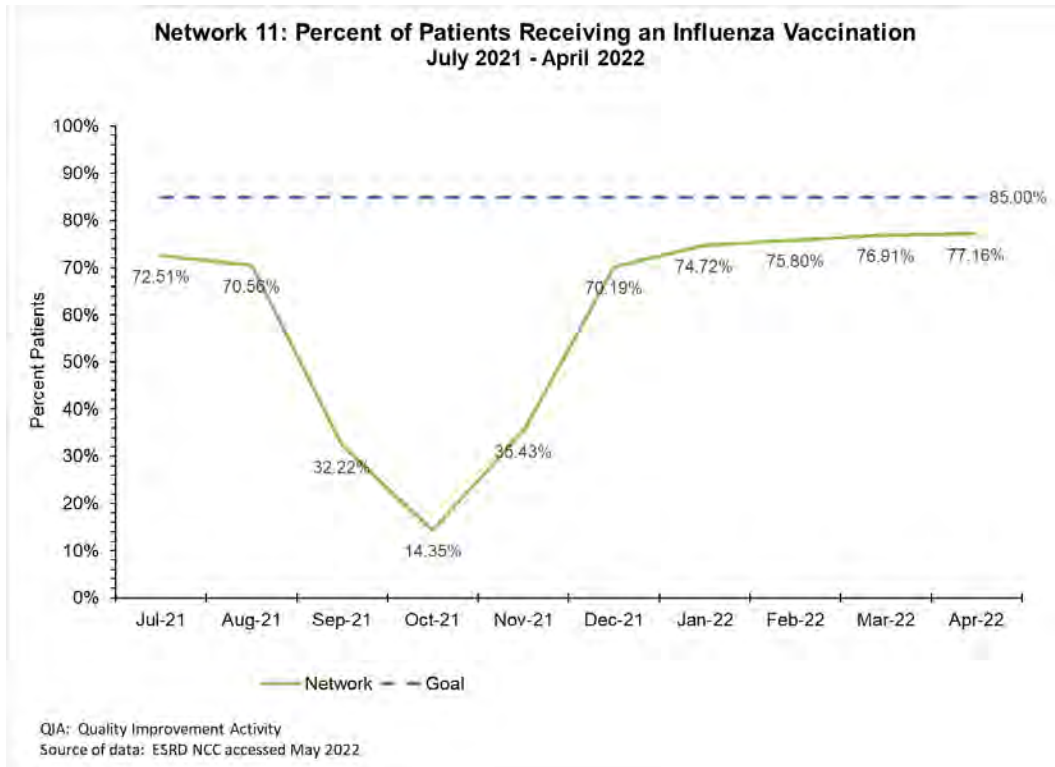
Interventions

- We led an Influenza poster contest for dialysis facilities, encouraging facilities to design bulletin boards to provide patient education about the influenza vaccination.
- We distributed the 2021 Vaccine Information sheet to all units for distribution to patients when they receive the vaccine.

- We began promoting pneumonia vaccinations in the summer so we could push influenza vaccinations in the fall.
- Midwest Kidney Network shared CDC recommended guidelines for vaccinations with all facilities.

Results

From June 2021 through April of 2022, Midwest Kidney Network’s rate of patients receiving an influenza vaccination progressed to 77.16%, working toward the goal of 85%.



COVID-19 Vaccinations Patients and Staff

June 2021 - April 2022

Network Goals

- Ensure a minimum of 80% of dialysis patients receive a primary COVID-19 vaccination or vaccination series.
- Ensure a minimum of 80% of fully vaccinated dialysis patients receive an additional CDC and/or CMS recommended COVID-19 vaccination.
- Ensure 100% of dialysis facility staff receive a primary COVID-19 vaccination or vaccination series.
- Ensure 100% of fully vaccinated dialysis facility staff receive an additional CDC and/or CMS recommended COVID-19 vaccination.

Project Participants

The 2021-2022 project included all dialysis facilities in the Midwest Kidney Network region.

Patient Engagement and Health Equity

Patients across the Network 11 service area shaped the direction of this project by supporting the development of educational tools and interventions. Patients helped support staff vaccination through sending a letter to dialysis staff thanking them for getting vaccinated. We promoted the “Give Your Community a Boost” vaccine campaign in conjunction with minority health month and shared COVID-19 vaccination education specific to various populations to help break down myths surrounding COVID-19.

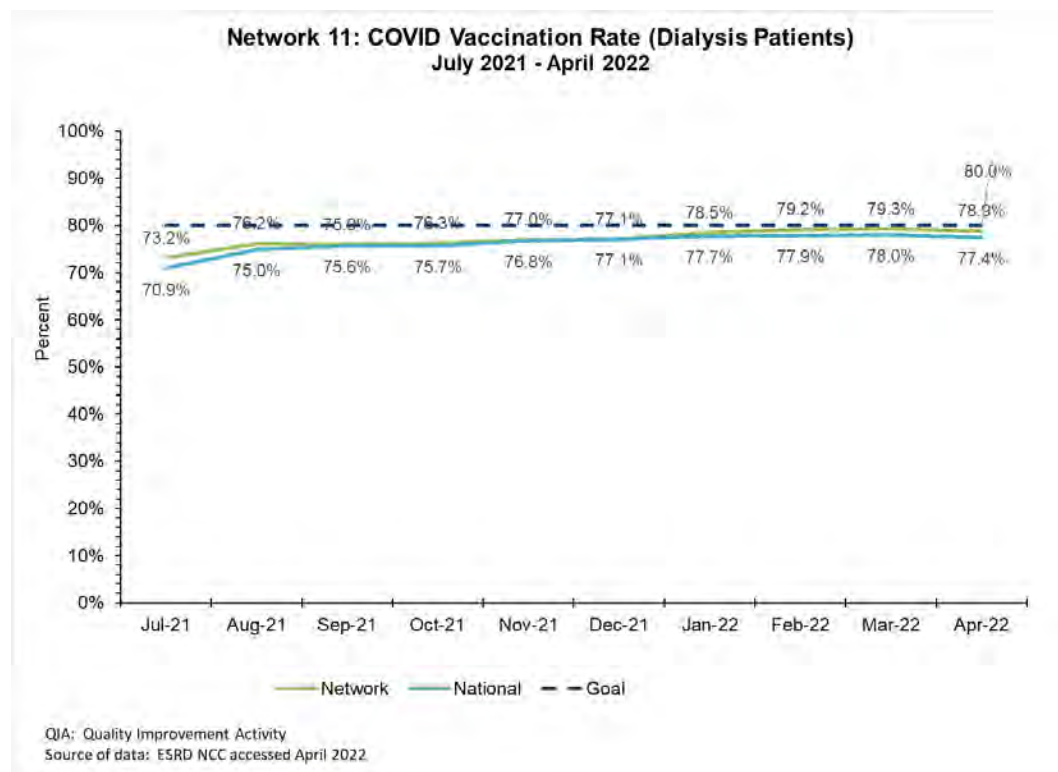
Interventions

- We frequently shared CDC education, updated guidance, and vaccination best practices with all Midwest Kidney Network facilities.
- We completed weekly technical assistance calls to facilities identified as having increased COVID-19 cases.
- We promoted maintained vigilance to infection control through sharing resources on combatting COVID-19 screening fatigue, including development of a patient education resource to help visualize how screening for infection symptoms is part of the pre-dialysis assessment.
- We convened monthly state-specific COVID-19 calls to discuss local case trends, identify challenges in vaccination, and promote infection mitigation strategies to reduce risk of COVID-19 hospitalizations.
- We prepared and delivered a presentation on a national COVID-19 vaccination expert teams call in March 2022.

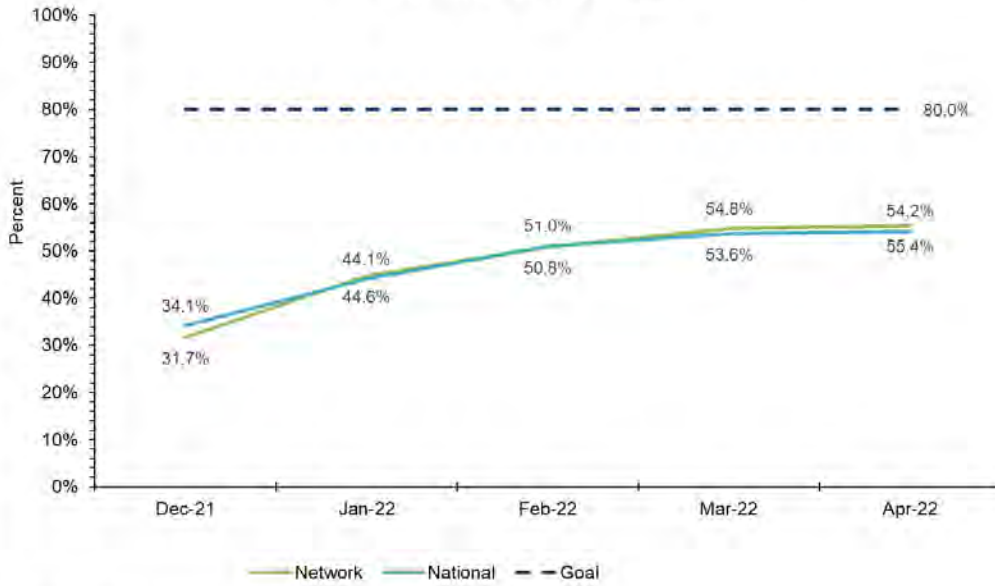
Results

From June 2021 through April of 2022, Midwest Kidney Network's rate of patients receiving a primary COVID-19 vaccination or vaccination series progressed to 78.9%, working toward the goal of 80%, with three of the five states in the Network exceeding the 80% goal. The rate of fully vaccinated dialysis patients receiving an additional CDC and/or CMS recommended COVID-19 vaccination progressed to 55.4%, working toward the goal of 80%.

The Network's rate of dialysis facility staff receiving a primary COVID-19 vaccination or vaccination series progressed to 76.2 %, working toward the goal of 100%. The rate of fully vaccinated dialysis facility staff receiving an additional CDC and/or CMS recommended COVID-19 vaccination progressed to 24.3%, working toward the goal of 100%.

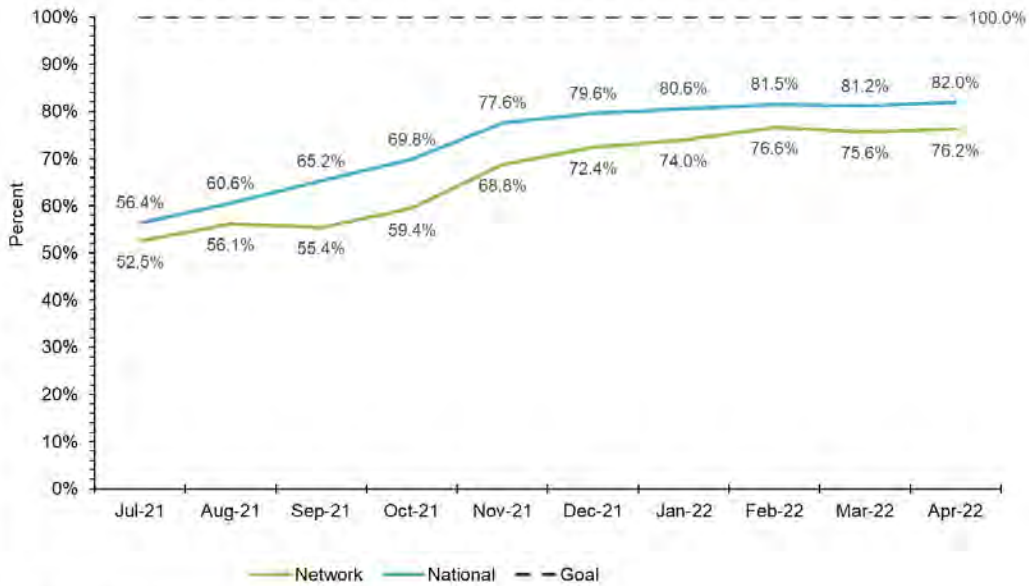


**Network 11: Percent of Fully Vaccinated Dialysis Patients Receiving COVID Vaccination Booster
December 2021 - April 2022**



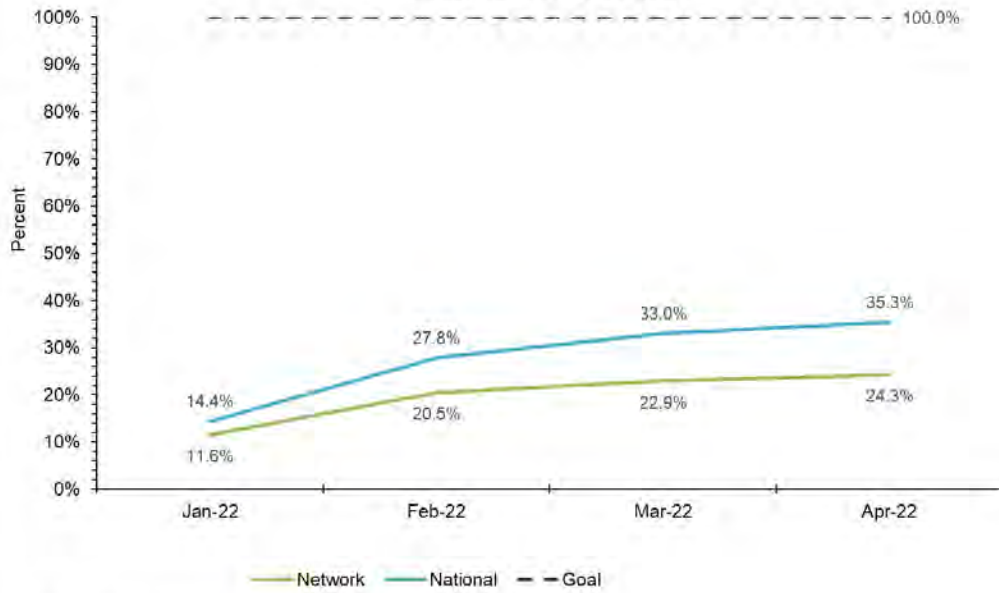
QIA: Quality Improvement Activity
Source of data: ESRD NCC accessed April 2022

**Network 11: COVID Vaccination Rate (Dialysis Facility Staff)
July 2021 - April 2022**



QIA: Quality Improvement Activity
Source of data: ESRD NCC accessed April 2022

Network 11: Percent of Fully Vaccinated Dialysis Facility Staff Receiving COVID Vaccination Booster December 2021 - April 2022



QIA: Quality Improvement Activity
Source of data: ESRD NCC accessed April 2022

Data Quality (Admissions, CMS Form 2728, CMS Form 2746)

June 2021 - April 2022

Network Goal

- Achieve an increase in the rate of patient admission records from dialysis facilities entered within five business days by 2%.
- Achieve an increase in the rate of CMS-2728 forms from dialysis facilities and transplant centers submitted within 45 days by 2%.
- Achieve an increase in the rate of CMS-2746 forms submitted from dialysis facilities within 14 days of the date of death by 2%.

Project Participants

The 2021-2022 Data Quality project included all dialysis facilities and transplant centers in the Midwest Kidney Network five state region.

Interventions

Midwest Kidney Network Data Staff completed the following interventions to support facility movement towards Data Quality goal completion.

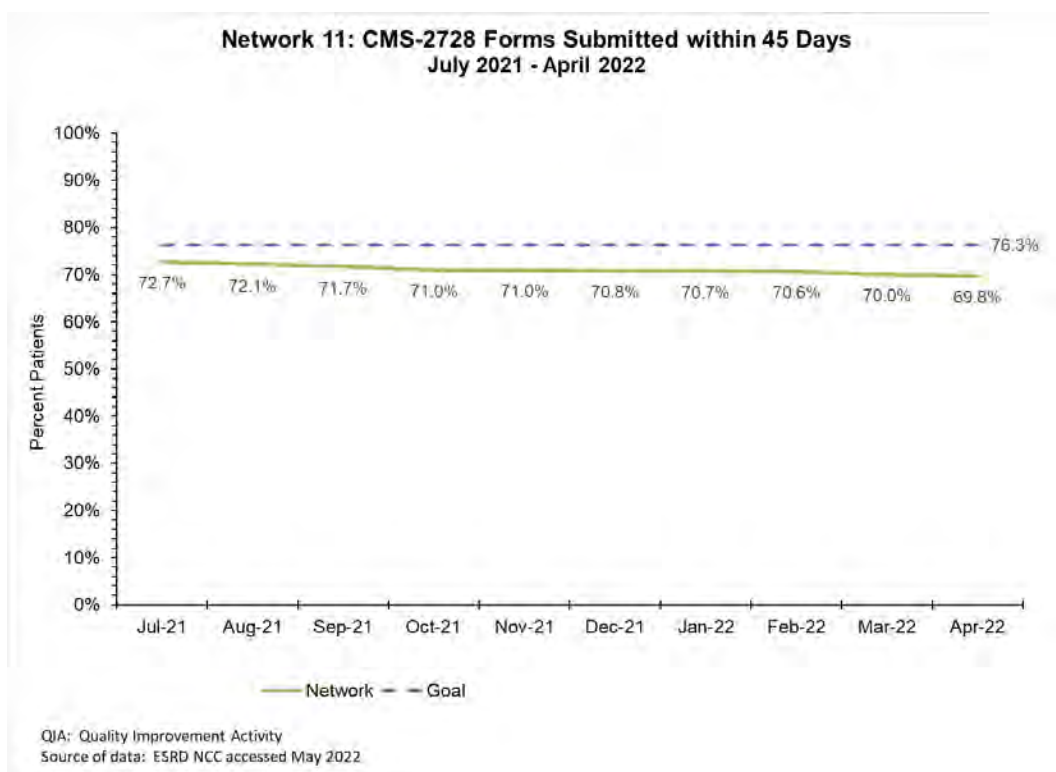
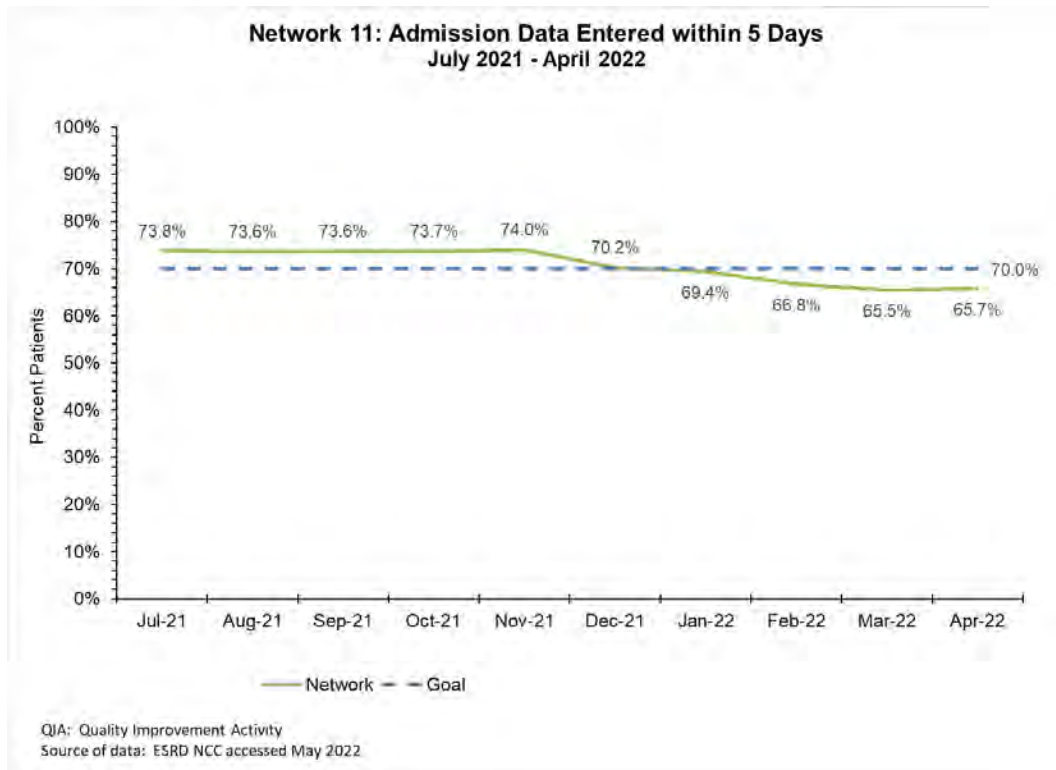
- EQRS Technical Assistance was offered to all providers in an on-demand basis. Dialysis facilities and transplant centers were able to call the Network and speak to Network Data Staff to resolve any EQRS issues.
- Weekly faxed reminders were sent to all dialysis facilities and transplant centers regarding upcoming due dates for CMS 2728 and CMS 2746 forms.
- EQRS job aids and recorded trainings were provided to all providers on the following topics: Updating Patient Demographics in EQRS, CMS 2728 and CMS 2746 Form Completion & Best Practices, and Entering EQRS Clinical Depression, Vocational Rehabilitation, & Patient Influenza data in EQRS.

Results

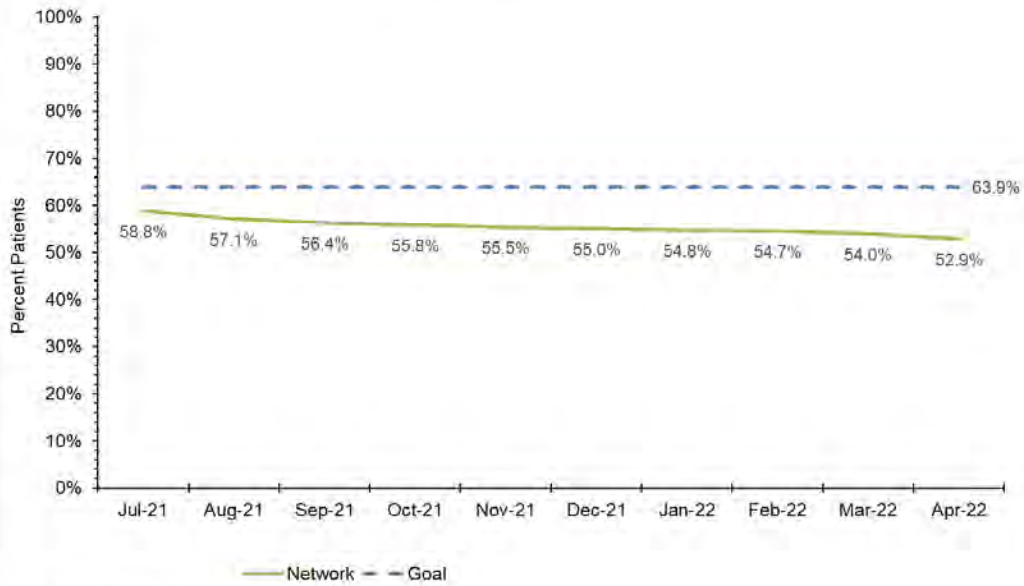
Midwest Kidney Network Data Quality rates decreased in relation to the goal in the 2021 – 2022 year. The Network attributes this decrease primarily to facility staffing shortages and increased reconciliation efforts by Midwest Kidney Network Data Staff to collect past due forms.

- From June of 2021 through April of 2022, Midwest Kidney Network’s rate of patient admission records entered within five business days decreased to 65.7%, working toward the goal of 70.0%.
- From June of 2021 through April of 2022, Midwest Kidney Network’s rate of CMS-2728 forms submitted within 45 days decreased to 69.8%, working toward the goal of 76.3%.

- From June of 2021 through April of 2022, Midwest Kidney Network's rate of CMS-2746 forms submitted within 45 days decreased to 52.9%, working toward the goal of 63.9%.



Network 11: CMS-2746 Forms Submitted within 14 Days of Death
July 2021 - April 2022



QIA: Quality Improvement Activity
Source of data: ESRD NCC accessed May 2022

Hospitalization

(Inpatient Admissions, ED Visits, Readmissions and COVID-19 Admissions)

June 2021 - April 2022

Network Goals

- Achieve a decrease in the rate of hospital admissions for a diagnosis on the Primary Diagnosis Categories in the Network service area by at least 2%, from a baseline of 3.15 to a goal of 3.087 admissions per 100 patient months.
- Achieve a decrease in the rate of outpatient emergency department visits for a diagnosis on the Primary Diagnosis Categories in the Network service area by at least 2%, from a baseline of 1.712 to a goal of 1.678 ED visits per 100 patient months.
- Achieve a decrease in the rate of hospital 30-day unplanned readmissions for a diagnosis on the Primary Diagnosis Categories in the Network service area by at least 2%, from a baseline of 11.5% to a goal of 11.27% of discharges.
- Achieve a decrease in the number of COVID-19 hospitalizations for ESRD patients with Medicare FFS as a payer source in the Network service area by at least 25%, for a goal of less than 1426 COVID-19 hospitalizations.

Project Participants

All dialysis providers in the Midwest Kidney Network service area participated in the project in 2021-2022.

Patient Engagement and Health Equity

Patients across the Network 11 service area shaped the direction of this project by supporting the development of educational tools and interventions. Patients helped identify key focus areas such as post-hospitalization practices, specifically medication reconciliation. Midwest Kidney Network analyzed unique needs impacting rates in rural versus urban areas and continues to develop strategies to address social determinants of health and their influences on hospitalization and emergency department usage.

Interventions

Midwest Kidney Network utilized various strategies to develop tailored interventions based on facility's unique needs. We promoted root cause analysis to understand the factors leading to hospitalization and promoted best practices to address transitions of care. Results-oriented interventions included the following activities:

- Analyzed hospitalization data and identified low-performing facilities for each separate goal of the project to receive tailored technical assistance specific to their needs. We shared facility rate trends over time to support project participation.

- Convened quarterly hospitalization advisory group meetings, that consisted of nephrologists, nurses, and patient subject matter experts to identify challenges, discuss best practices, review Network 11 data, and shape the project interventions.
- Convened monthly state-specific COVID calls to discuss local case trends, identify challenges in vaccination, and promote infection mitigation strategies to reduce risk of COVID hospitalizations.
- Promoted the Forum of ESRD Networks' Transition of Care Toolkit to improve practices post-hospitalization and increase communication with inpatient units to reduce the risk of readmission.
- Shared patient education resources defining the differences in seeking care in primary care versus urgent care versus the emergency department.
- Shared best practices and highlighted education on factors impacting hospitalization rates each month via email to all Network 11 facilities.
- Prepared and delivered a presentation for the national Hospitalization Community of Practice call in March 2022 where we shared root cause analysis findings, best practices, and interventions.

Results

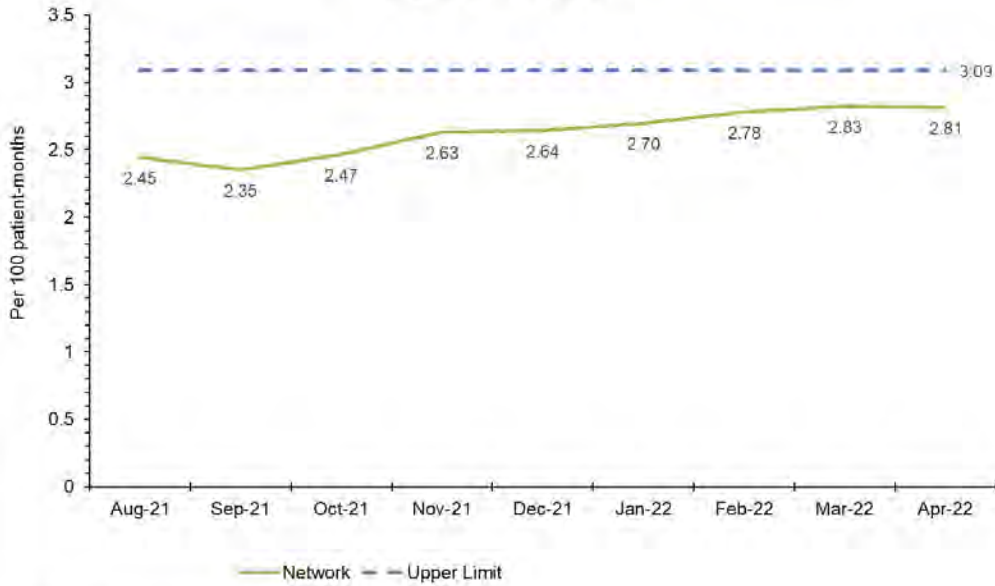
From June 2021 through April of 2022, Midwest Kidney Network met the goal for decreasing the rate of hospital admissions with a final rate of 2.814 admissions per 100 patient months.

The Network also met the goal for decreasing the rate of outpatient emergency department visits with a final rate of 1.627 visits per 100 patient months.

The Network's final rate of hospital 30-day unplanned readmissions was 11.4%, working towards the goal of 11.27%.

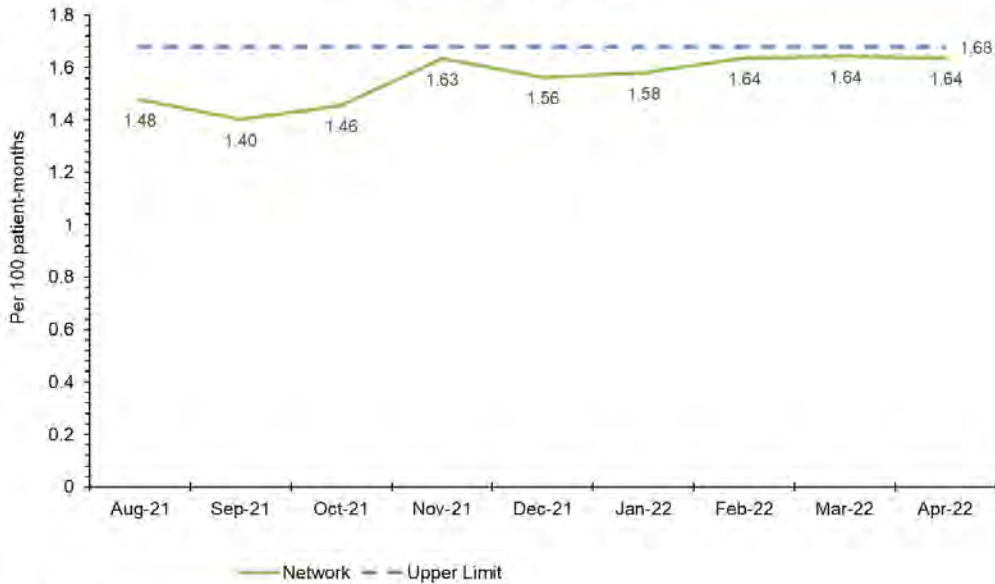
In the last month of the project, the Midwest Kidney Network exceeded the upper limit for COVID-19 hospitalizations with 1472 ESRD patients hospitalized.

**Network 11: Rate of ESRD-Related Hospital Admissions per 100 Patient-months (lower rates are better)
August 2021 - April 2022**



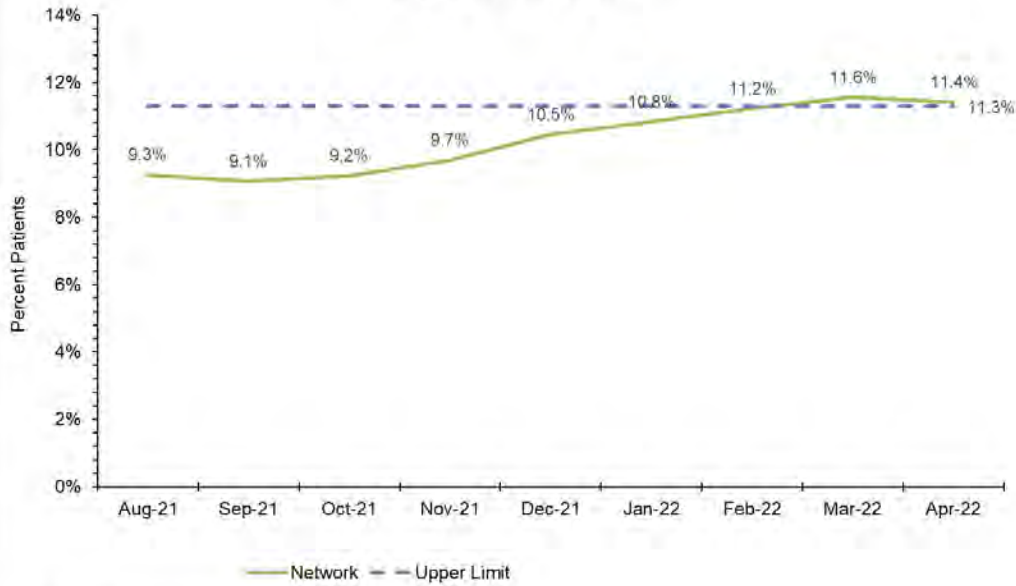
QIA: Quality Improvement Activity
Source of data: ESRD NCC accessed May 2022

**Network 11: Outpatient Emergency Department Visits per 100 Patient-months (lower rates are better)
August 2021 - April 2022**



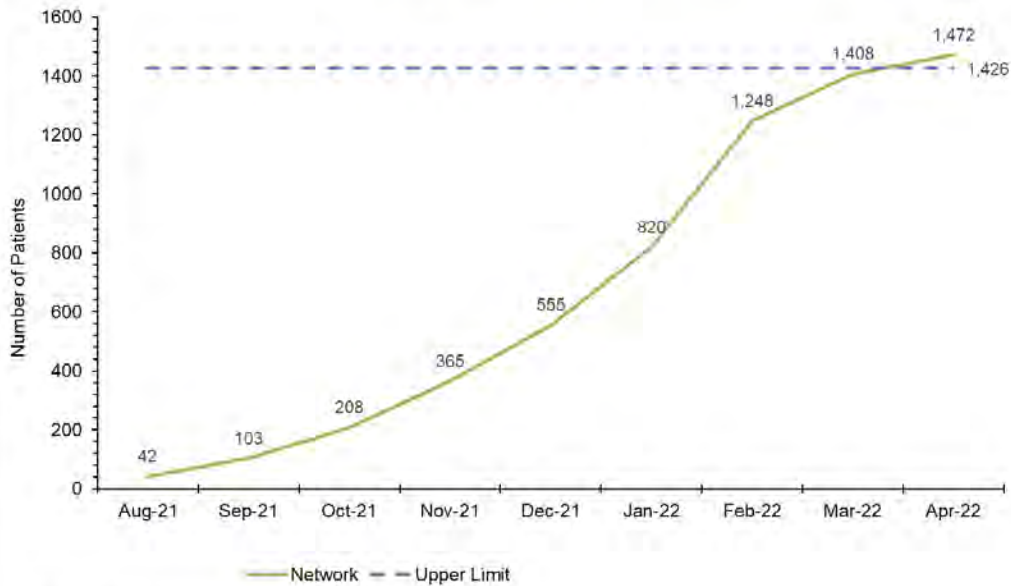
QIA: Quality Improvement Activity
Source of data: ESRD NCC accessed May 2022

**Network 11: Hospital 30-Day Unplanned Readmissions
(lower rates are better)
August 2021 - April 2022**



QIA: Quality Improvement Activity
Source of data: ESRD NCC accessed May 2022

**Network 11: COVID-19 Hospitalizations (lower values are better)
August 2021 - April 2022**



QIA: Quality Improvement Activity
Source of data: ESRD NCC accessed May 2022

Depression June 2021 - April 2022

Due to contract goal adjustments, the Network worked toward the goals of this quality improvement activity but was not evaluated on results.

Network Goals

Achieve a 15% increase in the percentage of patients accurately identified as having depression. Achieve a 10% increase in the percentage of patients, identified as having depression, who are treated by a mental health professional.

Project Participants

All dialysis providers in the Midwest Kidney Network service area participated in the project in 2021-2022.

Patient Engagement and Health Equity

Patients across the Network 11 service area were invited to be part of each Midwest Kidney Network project including the depression project. MKN's Consumer Committee members and the Behavioral Health Coalition helped shaped the direction of this project with their feedback and assistance in the development of educational tools and interventions. We continue to discuss the impact of and mitigation strategies for health equity and depression.

Interventions

Midwest Kidney Network incorporated a variety of strategic interventions, including:

- Invited community stakeholders to be part of the MKN behavioral health coalition. This dynamic group includes 5 renal social workers, a behavioral health therapist, a psychiatrist, and a patient SME. This coalition helped develop a plan for this project and assisted with the development of resources.
- Two social workers from the Network 11 region spoke on a national Community of Practice call on Depression Assessment and Treatment.
- The Network conducted a SurveyMonkey with facility social workers to assess barriers and what was needed at the facility level to assist with increasing assessment for depression and follow-up if a patient is depressed.
- Educational resources were developed and shared including a tip sheet on best practices for assessment for depression and follow-up and a resource list for both social workers and their patients struggling with depression.

Results

From June 2021 through April 2022, Midwest Kidney Network educated and provided resources for both dialysis staff and patients. Tip sheets were developed and distributed on how to input depression data into EQRS to make sure accurate data was being tabulated.

Nursing Home June 2021 - April 2022

Due to contract goal adjustments, the Network worked toward the goals of this quality improvement activity but was not evaluated on results.

Network Goals

- Achieve a decrease in the rate of blood transfusions in ESRD patients dialyzing in a nursing home by at least 2%, from a baseline of 10.336 to a goal of less than 10.27 blood transfusions per 100 patient months.
- Achieve a decrease in the rate of hemodialysis catheter infections in dialysis patients receiving home dialysis within nursing homes by at least 4%, from a baseline of 0.146 to a goal of less than 0.144 hemodialysis catheter infections per 100 patient months.
- Achieve a decrease in the rate of incidence of peritonitis in dialysis patients receiving home dialysis within nursing homes by at least 2%, from a baseline of 6.723 to a goal of less than 6.68 peritonitis infections per 100 patient months.

Project Participants

All dialysis facilities in the Midwest Kidney Network service area which provide dialysis treatments within a nursing home setting participated in the project in 2021-2022.

Patient Engagement and Health Equity

Patients across the Network 11 service area shaped the direction of this project by supporting the development of educational tools and interventions and shared perspectives on benefits of HHD & PD in the SNF setting.

Midwest Kidney Network also looked at disparities in home dialysis within the skilled nursing home setting and shared related resources to staff and patients throughout the year.

Interventions

Midwest Kidney Network incorporated a variety of strategic interventions including:

- Distributed the CDC Audit tools to units with patients in a skilled nursing facility (SNF) to decrease the blood stream infections in patients dialyzing in that setting.
- Promoted an online seminar on anemia management from Qsource/Telligen December 2021
- Convened technical assistance calls to discuss Root Cause Analysis on patients with anemia and history of transfusions, CVC infections and peritonitis.
- Shared resources such as infection control for patients in the SNF setting as well as a toolkit for infection control in the SNF setting from Yale University.

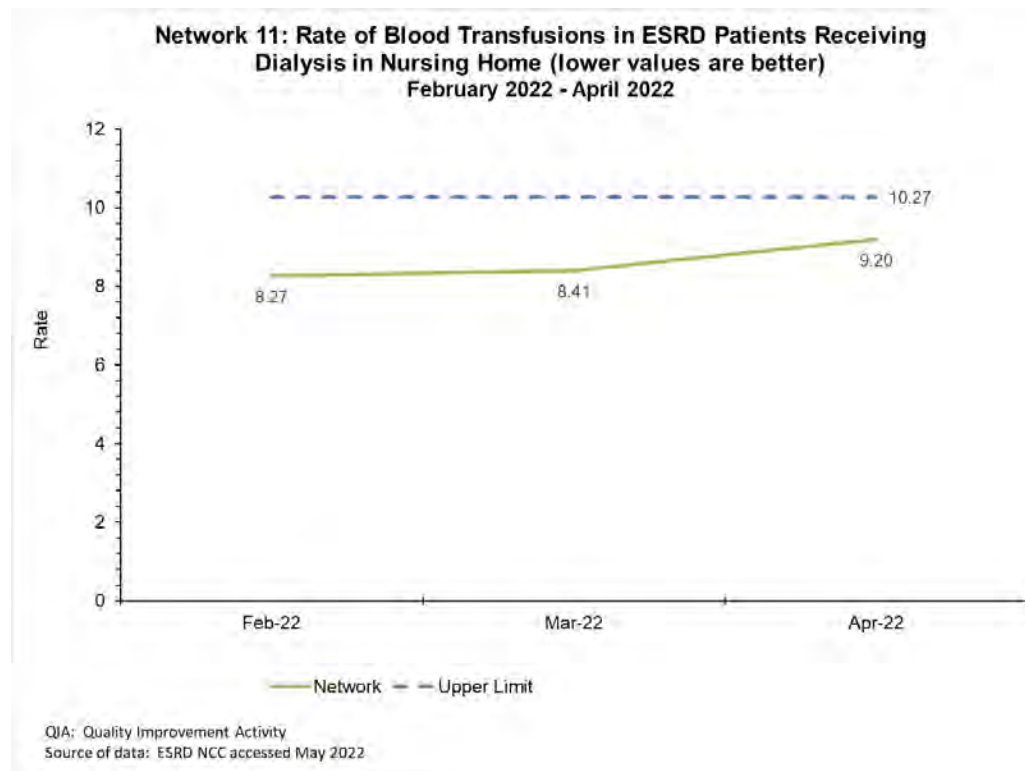
- Network 11 provided resources to cohort facilities on peritonitis such as the ESRD National Coordinating Center (NCC) tools on preventing peritonitis.

Results

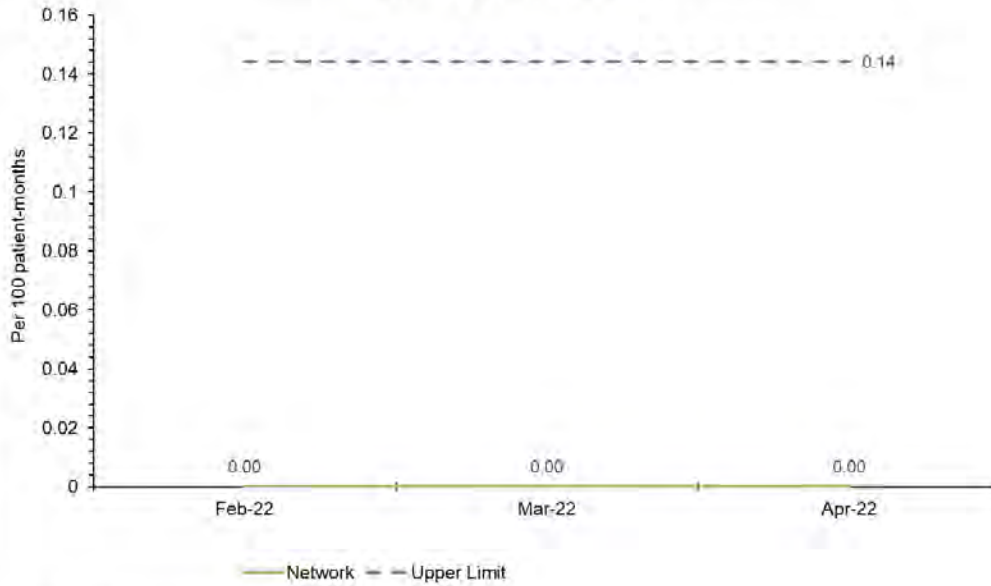
From June 2021 through April 2022, Midwest Kidney Network met and exceeded the goal for decreasing the rate of blood transfusions in ESRD patients dialyzing in a nursing home with a final rate of 9.201 blood transfusions per 100 patient months.

The Network met and exceeded the goal for decreasing the rate of hemodialysis catheter infections in dialysis patients receiving home dialysis within nursing homes with zero infections during the project period.

The Network met and exceeded the goal for decreasing the rate of incidence of peritonitis in dialysis patients receiving home dialysis within nursing homes with a final rate of 6.522 peritonitis infections per 100 patient months.

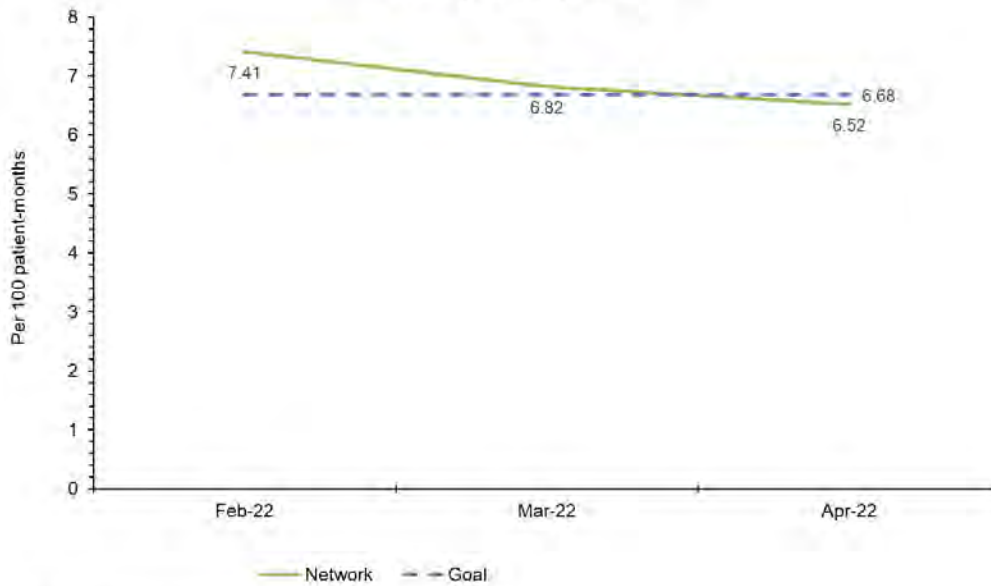


Network 11: Hemodialysis Catheter Infections in Home Dialysis Patients within Nursing Homes (lower values are better)
February 2022 - April 2022



QIA: Quality Improvement Activity
Source of data: ESRD NCC accessed May 2022

Network 11: Peritonitis Events in Home Dialysis Patients within Nursing Homes (lower values are better)
February 2022 - April 2022



QIA: Quality Improvement Activity
Source of data: ESRD NCC accessed May 2022

Telemedicine June 2021 - April 2022

Due to contract goal adjustments, the Network worked toward the goals of this quality improvement activity but was not evaluated on results.

Network Goal

Achieve an increase in the number of rural ESRD patients using telemedicine to access a home modality in the Network service area by at least 2% (less 0.17% for each month that the telemedicine feature is unavailable). With a baseline of 368 patients using telemedicine to access a home modality, the goal for the Midwest Kidney Network was 372 patients.

Project Participants

The 2021-2022 project included all rural dialysis facilities providing home dialysis in the Midwest Kidney Network region.

Patient Engagement and Health Equity

Patients across the Midwest Kidney Network service area shaped the direction of this project by supporting the development of educational tools and interventions. Patients helped identify key focus areas such as proximity to home dialysis unit, ability to provide transportation to the home unit and how to participate in telemedicine with their internet availability.

Network 11 also looked at disparities in home dialysis and shared related resources to staff and patients throughout the year.

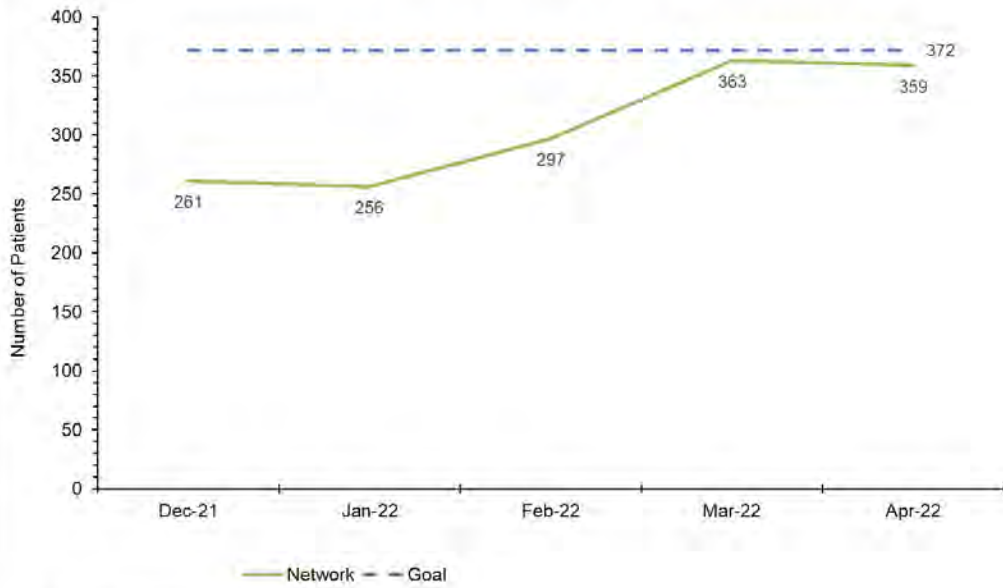
Interventions

- We provided the National Coordinator Center (NCC) Telemedicine Toolkit to all home dialysis units.
- NCC Patient tip sheets were distributed to facilities to review this procedure with patients and determine what should be done before the visit to assure a satisfactory experience.

Results

From June 2021 through April 2022, 359 rural home dialysis patients in the Midwest Kidney Network region used telemedicine, working toward the goal of 372. Many patients preferred to see their physician in person although many patients appreciated learning about this technology.

**Network 11: Number of Rural ESRD Patients Using Telemedicine
December 2021 - April 2022**



QIA: Quality Improvement Activity
Source of data: ESRD NCC accessed May 2022.

Vaccinations Pneumococcal 13 & 23 and Staff Influenza June-April 2022

Due to contract goal adjustments, the Network worked toward the goals of this quality improvement activity but was not evaluated on results.

Network Goals

- Achieve an increase in the number of dialysis patients receiving a pneumococcal conjugate vaccination (PCV 13) in the Network service area by at least 10%.
- Ensure a minimum of 87% of dialysis patients receive a pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV 23).
- Achieve an increase in the number of dialysis patients receiving a pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV 23) in the Network service area by at least 10%.
- Ensure a minimum of 80% of dialysis patients over 65 years of age receive a pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV 23).
- Ensure a minimum of 90% of dialysis facility staff receive an influenza vaccination.

Project Participants

The 2021-2022 project included all dialysis facilities in the Midwest Kidney Network region.

Patient Engagement and Health Equity

Patients across the Network 11 service area shaped the direction of this project by supporting the development of educational tools and interventions. Patients helped identify key focus areas such as resources on disparities and were active members of the Midwest Kidney Network Advisory Group.

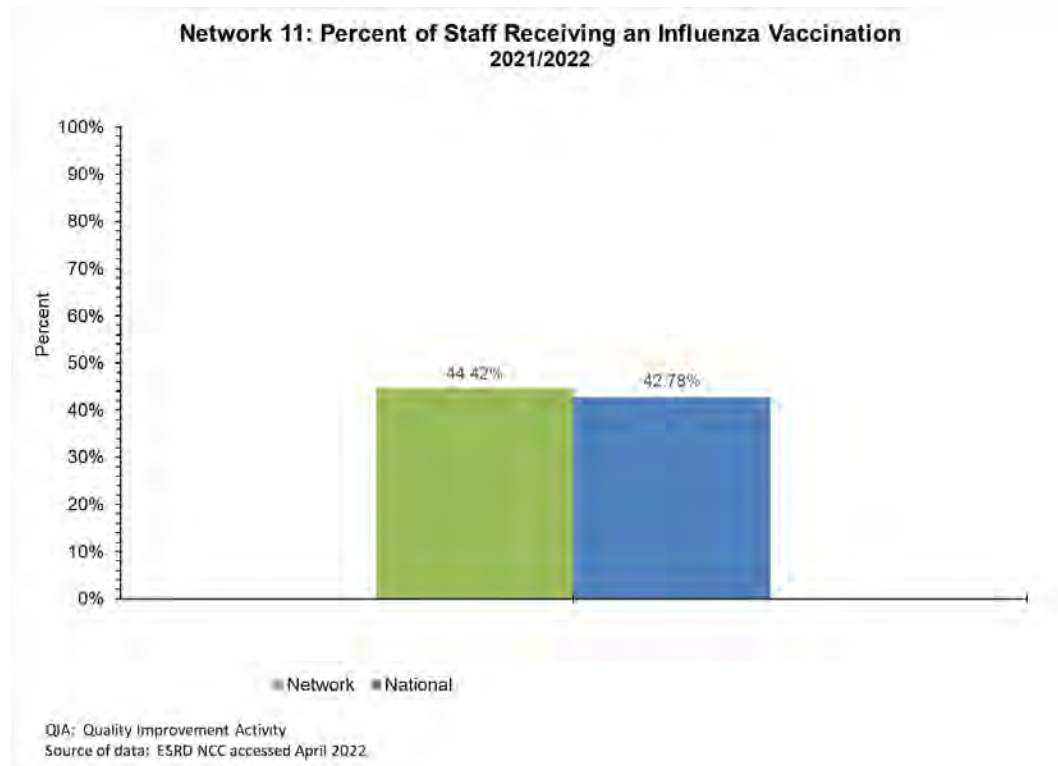
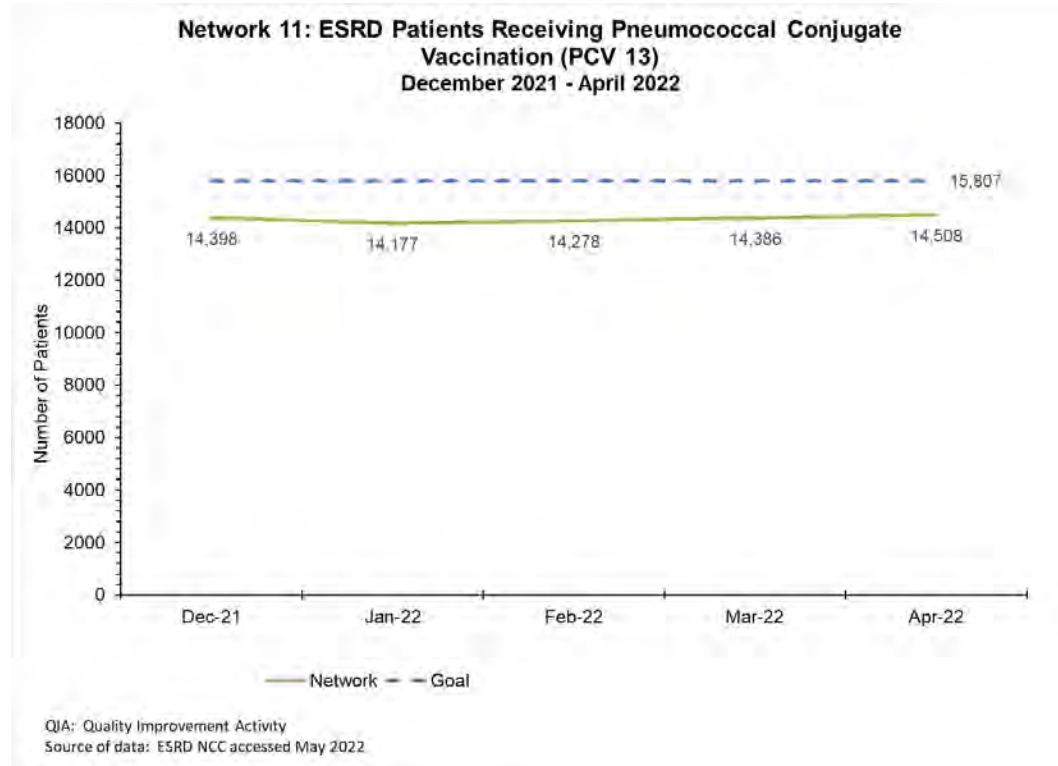
Interventions

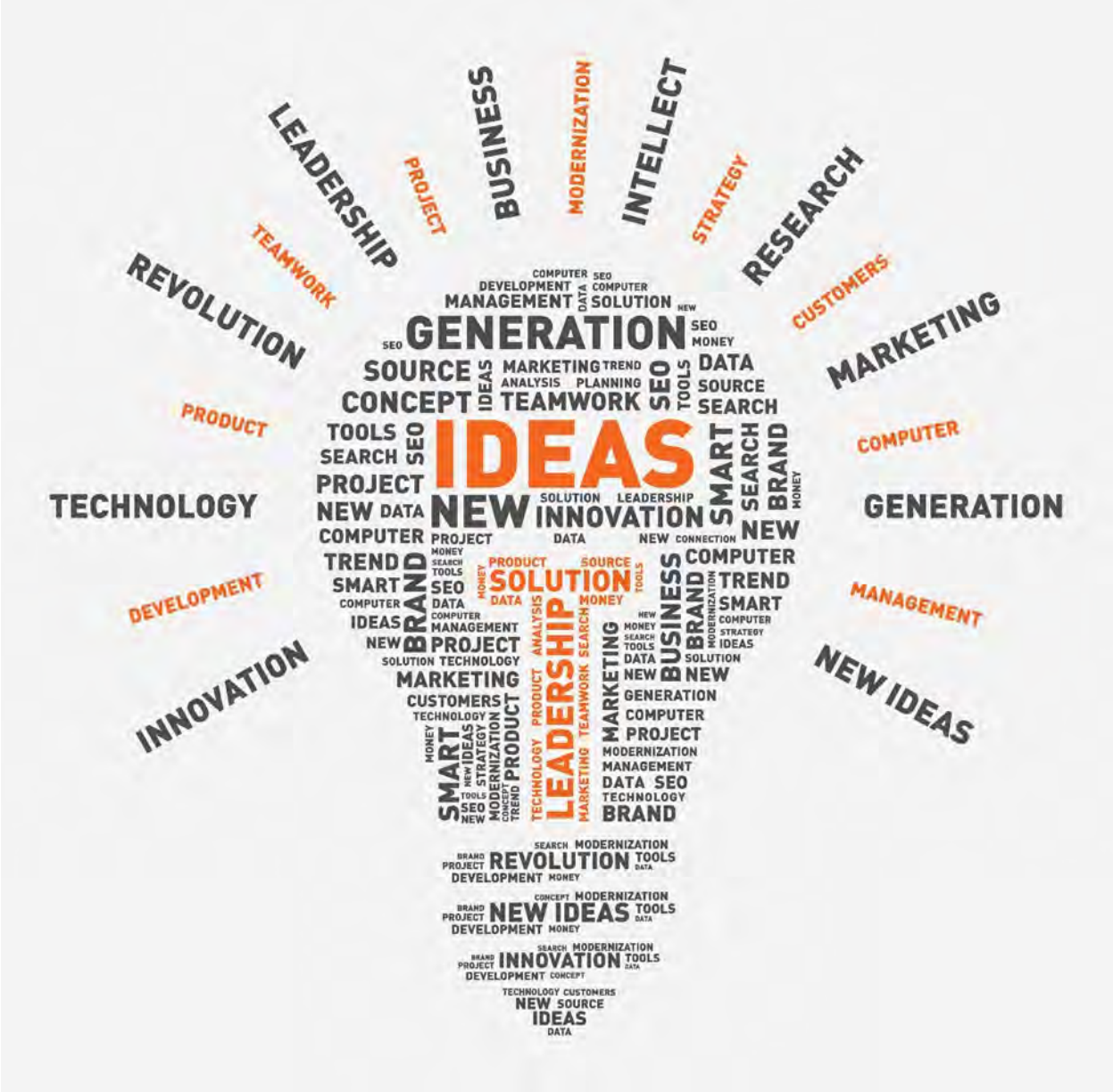
- We began promoting pneumonia vaccinations in June through August so patients were protected before the winter season starts and so they can receive their influenza vaccination starting in September.
- We provided resources on the current CDC recommendations on pneumococcal and flu vaccination, and updated information as available.
- The Network also provided resources, education and tools to facilities on the importance of a tracking tool and vaccination manager.

Results

From June 2021 through April of 2022, the number of patients in the Midwest Kidney Network region receiving a pneumococcal conjugate vaccination (PCV 13) progressed to 14,508 working toward the goal of 15,807.

The Network's rate of dialysis facility staff receiving an influenza vaccination progressed to 44.42%, working toward the goal of 90%.





ESRD NETWORK RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Sanctions

Midwest Kidney Network monitors ESRD facilities in this region using annually updated Midwest Kidney Network Recommended Treatment goals and other indicators. In 2021, the Network did not recommend any sanctions or alternative sanctions.

Recommendations to CMS for Additional Services or Facilities

Several Change Packages have been developed to support quality improvement activities for the ESRD Program including Vaccinations, Hospitalization, Grievances and Access to Care, and more. These resources helped Networks work toward the goals of improved care and quality of life for kidney patients. To help support CMS Rural Health Strategy and improving health equity, it could be helpful if a workgroup was developed representing all aspects of the community (especially rural/urban, racial/ethnic, age and gender) to develop a change package to promote best practices and successes related to health equity and rural health care. In particular, the successful use and active engagement of a Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI) Ambassador to address specific facility or regional shortcomings to improve care and the quality of life for patients.

ESRD NETWORK COVID-19 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS INTERVENTION

Assessing Provider and Patient Needs

The Midwest Kidney Network continuously reviewed surge areas across the five-state region to identify facilities whose patient population showed increases in COVID-19 cases. The Network provided facility-specific technical assistance to these clinics, identified possible exposure sources, reviewed current interventions, and offered specific strategies for facilities and patients to improve safety and infection control in the clinic setting.

Collaboration with Stakeholders

Midwest Kidney Network hosted and facilitated regularly scheduled state-specific calls with a variety of stakeholders including state surveyors, state emergency preparedness staff, and representatives from dialysis providers. These calls provided a platform to discuss emerging state-specific COVID-19 issues and the potential impact on the provision of dialysis care.

Network 11 staff participated in COVID-19 update calls led by the Kidney Response Emergency Coalition (KCER) and CMS. We provided weekly data on COVID-19 cases, vaccinations, and technical assistance KCER and the ESRD NCC.

Resources Developed and Education Provided

Providing COVID-19 resources, guidance, and updates were a critical part of the Network's interaction with dialysis and kidney transplant providers in 2021. In addition to providing this information to our stakeholders via email and social media, we developed a [dedicated webpage](#) on the Network website to house COVID-19 resources.

ESRD NETWORK SIGNIFICANT EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS INTERVENTION

In 2021, dialysis providers in the Midwest Kidney Network region experienced several non-COVID related emergencies such as inclement weather, power outages, and flooding. Despite these challenges, dialysis providers experienced very few interruptions in service. In partnership with the Kidney Community Response (KCER) Coalition, we submitted five Emergency Status Situational Reports (ESSRs) in 2021 and one for the time period January - April 2022.

- **January 29, 2021:** Monitored facility in Roseville, Minnesota that experienced water, electrical and HVAC damage due to a fire at the unit.
- **February 25, 2021:** Monitored facility in Rochester Hills, Michigan that experienced water damage from flooding.
- **March 1, 2021:** Monitored facility in Huron, SD that temporarily closed due required repairs to the water system.
- **April 12, 2021:** Monitored facility in Grosse Pointe, Michigan that temporarily closed due to flooding in the area.
- **August 11, 2021:** Assisted several dialysis facilities in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin area that experienced a power outage in the city.
- **January 13, 2022:** Monitored facility in Thief River Falls, Minnesota that experienced electrical problems following a flood.

Additional Activities

- Distributed over 200 emergency preparedness guides for patients on dialysis by mail and through the Midwest Kidney Network website.
- Monitored facilities in flood-prone regions throughout Spring 2022.
- Updated Midwest Kidney Network's emergency preparedness plans.
- Provided technical assistance to dialysis providers on emergency plans.

ACRONYM LIST APPENDIX

This appendix contains an acronym list created by the KPAC (Kidney Patient Advisory Council) of the National Forum of ESRD Networks. We are grateful to the KPAC for creating this list of acronyms to assist patients and stakeholders in the readability of this annual report. We appreciate the collaboration of the National Forum of ESRD Networks especially the KPAC.