



# Quick Guide Dialysis Facility Care Compare

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## QUICK GUIDE

# Dialysis Facility Care Compare

## I. INTRODUCTION

### About Dialysis Facility Care Compare (DFCC)



The Dialysis Facility Care Compare (DFCC) on the [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) Care Compare website is hosted by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and has information about dialysis clinics and the care they provide. The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 gave DFCC on [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) the legislative authority to collect and report data.

A key feature of the DFCC on [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) is the Quality of Patient Care Star Rating, which provides a simple summary of the quality of care a dialysis clinic provides. CMS developed the Quality of Patient Care Star Rating in response to a national call for greater transparency in how to measure the quality of care for patients with kidney disease and consumers' desire to use health care quality data to make informed decisions. The Quality of Patient Care Star Rating was implemented in 2015.

The DFCC on [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) also includes star ratings from patient experience surveys collected through the In-Center Hemodialysis (ICH) Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey. Results from the survey are displayed as 1 to 5 stars based on how patients rated their facility.

The following initiatives were the basis for the development of the DFCC on [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) Star Ratings:

- Affordable Care Act
- National Quality Strategy
- Obama Administration's Digital Government Strategy

### DFCC on Medicare.gov Goals & Target Audiences



The goal of the DFCC on [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) is to give all members of the kidney disease community access to up-to-date information about dialysis care. The information on DFCC on Medicare.gov can be used by patients, researchers, and health care providers:

- Patients find clinics and compare quality of care using the star ratings
- Health care researchers study end-stage renal disease (ESRD) dialysis patient outcomes and facility care
- Dialysis clinic staff see where they can improve quality of care

CMS regularly updates the DFCC on [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) with new information and works closely with the kidney disease community to make sure the quality measures reported on the website reflect best practices of care for ESRD patients on dialysis.

CMS also regularly meets with members of the kidney disease community in numerous ways, including patient focus groups, conference calls, webinars, and Technical Expert Panels (TEPs). CMS always welcomes comments on our work with the kidney disease community. Please send your comments to [dialysisdata@umich.edu](mailto:dialysisdata@umich.edu).





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## II. WEBSITE OVERVIEW

### What's on Dialysis Facility Care Compare on Medicare.gov



Users can search Care Compare for dialysis facilities by location. Users can also include a specific name. Available information about clinics includes:

- Star rating for quality of care
- Star rating for patient experience
- Distance from your home
- Hours (whether you can receive treatments after 5 pm)
- Home hemodialysis training offerings
- Number of hemodialysis stations
- Treatments offered (in-center hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis)
- Profit/nonprofit status & corporate name
- Date of Medicare certification
- Clinical quality measure results
- Patient survey results shown next to state and national averages

### About the Data

The data on the DFCC on [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) come from the following sources:

#### National Claims History Standard Analytical Files (NCH SAFs)

- These Medicare claims contain information collected by CMS.
- Data from this source is used on the DFCC website to calculate quality of patient care measures and Star Ratings.

#### End Stage Renal Disease Quality Reporting System (EQRS)

- The End Stage Renal Disease Quality Reporting System (EQRS) is a web-based data collection system launched in November 2020. EQRS is mandated by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to enable dialysis facilities to meet portions of the Conditions for Coverage (CfC) for ESRD dialysis facilities.
- ESRD Networks and dialysis facilities use EQRS to enter and submit data that include facility details, CMS forms, patient admission/discharges, and monthly patient clinical data.
- Data from this source are used on the DFCC website to calculate quality of patient care measures and Star Ratings.

#### In-Center Hemodialysis Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (ICH CAHPS) Survey

- CMS and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) developed the ICH CAHPS Survey to provide a standardized survey to gather patient perspectives on the care received at dialysis facilities. The ICH CAHPS Survey is administered twice a year.
- Data from this source are used on the DFCC website to calculate the survey of patients' experiences of care measures and the patients' experiences star ratings.

#### National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN)

- NHSN is the nation's most widely used health care-associated infection tracking system.
- Data from this source are used on the DFCC website to calculate a quality of patient care measure.





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# Dialysis Facility Care Compare

### Website Navigation



The Care Compare home page features a list of provider types. Users can select their location and the facility type. Below this section are links to tips and resources:

- [About This Tool](#) – provides basic information about what the tool can do
- [Info for Health Care Providers](#) – shares links to resources for health care providers
- [Resources and Information](#) – shares links with information about the facilities types covered on Care Compare

## III. MEASURES DISPLAYED ON DIALYSIS FACILITY CARE COMPARE ON MEDICARE.GOV

### DFCC Measures



Dialysis Facility Care Compare’s quality measures are the main way the DFCC website tracks the quality of care in dialysis facilities. DFCC measures are based on a set of criteria and summarize how well a dialysis facility:

- Avoids unnecessary transfusions
- Prevents bloodstream infections
- Removes waste from the blood
- Maintains nutritional status
- Uses the most effective access to the bloodstream
- Keeps a patient’s minerals in balance
- Avoids hospitalizations, re-admissions, and deaths
- Provides support for getting patients on the Transplant Waitlist
- Promotes a high quality patient experience

State and national averages are shown next to a facility’s averages as a reference for how well the facility cares for its patients. The scores a facility receives on the following DFCC measures are combined into the Quality of Patient Care Star Rating.

- Proportion of Patients with Hypercalcemia
- Standardized Transfusion Ratio
- Total Kt/V Measure:
  - Delivered Dose of Hemodialysis Above Minimum
  - Minimum spKt/V for Pediatric Hemodialysis Patients
  - Delivered Dose of Peritoneal Dialysis Above Minimum
  - Pediatric Peritoneal Dialysis Adequacy: Achievement of Target Kt/V
- Standardized Mortality Ratio
- Standardized Hospitalization Ratio
- Standardized Readmission Ratio
- Hemodialysis Vascular Access: Standardized Fistula Rate
- Hemodialysis Vascular Access: Long-Term Catheter Rate

DFCC measures were created by CMS working together with health care providers, dialysis facilities and their staff, patients, and measure experts. The measures give a summary of the quality of care by focusing on the most important parts of dialysis treatments.

The measures are reviewed by stakeholders and other experts on a regular basis. Dialysis providers, patients, caregivers, and other experts also provide important input on new measures.





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# Dialysis Facility Care Compare

### List of Measures



The DFCC on [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) home page features a list of provider types. Users can select their location and the facility type.

## QUALITY OF PATIENT CARE STAR RATING

- Data source: Medicare claims and the [CMS/ESRD Quality Reporting System \(EQRS\)](#)
- Date updated on this website: Annually (October)

## QUALITY OF PATIENT CARE MEASURES

### Avoiding unnecessary transfusions (anemia management)

#### Rate of transfusions

- Data source: Medicare claims and [EQRS](#)
- Technical measure title: Standardized transfusion rate
- Date updated on this website: Annually (October)

### Preventing bloodstream infections

#### Standardized infection ratio classification category

- Data source: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) collects data from dialysis facilities via the [National Healthcare Safety Network \(NHSN\) tool](#)
- Technical measure title: Bloodstream standardized infection ratio
- Date updated on this website: Annually (October)

### Removing waste from blood (dialysis adequacy) and nutritional status

#### Adult patients who had enough waste removed from their blood during hemodialysis

- Data source: Medicare claims and [EQRS](#)
- Technical measure title: Percentage of adult hemodialysis patients who had a Kt/V greater than or equal to 1.2
- Date updated on this website: Quarterly (January, April, July, and October)

#### Adult patients who had enough waste removed from their blood during peritoneal dialysis

- Data source: Medicare claims and [EQRS](#)
- Technical measure title: Percentage of adult peritoneal dialysis patients who had a Kt/V greater than or equal to 1.7
- Date updated on this website: Quarterly (January, April, July, and October)





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### List of Measures (contd)



#### Children who had enough waste removed from their blood during hemodialysis

- Data source: Medicare claims and [EQRS](#)
- Technical measure title: Percentage of pediatric hemodialysis patients who had a Kt/V greater than or equal to 1.2
- Date updated on this website: Quarterly (January, April, July, and October)

#### Children who had enough waste removed from their blood during peritoneal dialysis

- Data source: Medicare claims and [EQRS](#)
- Technical measure title: Percentage of pediatric peritoneal patients who had a Kt/V greater than or equal to 1.8
- Date updated on this website: Quarterly (January, April, July, and October)

#### Children who had a monthly normalized protein catabolic rate (nPCR) measured during in-center hemodialysis

- Data source: [EQRS](#)
- Technical measure title: Percentage of patient months of pediatric in-center hemodialysis patients with documented monthly nPCR measurements
- Date updated on this website: Quarterly (January, April, July, and October)

#### [Using the most effective access to the bloodstream \(vascular access\)](#)

##### Adult patients who received treatment through an arteriovenous fistula

- Data source: [EQRS](#)
- Technical measure title: Standardized Fistula Rate
- Date updated on this website: Quarterly (January, April, July, and October)

##### Adult patients who had a catheter (tube) left in a vein for at least 3 consecutive complete months, for their regular hemodialysis treatments

- Data source: [EQRS](#)
- Technical measure title: Long Term Catheter rate
- Date updated on this website: Quarterly (January, April, July, and October)

#### [Keeping a patient's mineral levels in balance \(mineral & bone disorder\)](#)

##### Adult patients who had too much calcium in their blood

- Data source: [EQRS](#)
- Technical measure title: Percentage of adult patients who had an average calcium over the past three months greater than 10.2 mg/dL or missing (hypercalcemia)
- Date updated on this website: Quarterly (January, April, July, and October)





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# Dialysis Facility Care Compare

### List of Measures (contd)



#### Avoiding hospitalizations & deaths

##### Frequency of hospital admission

- Data source: Medicare claims and [EQRS](#)
- Technical measure title: Standardized hospitalization rate
- Date updated on this website: Annually (October)

##### Frequency of hospital readmission

- Data source: Medicare claims and [EQRS](#)
- Technical measure title: Standardized readmission rate
- Date updated on this website: Annually (October)

##### Frequency of patient death

- Data source: Medicare claims and [EQRS](#)
- Technical measure title: Standardized mortality rate
- Date updated on this website: Annually (October)

#### Transplant Waitlist

##### Patients who were listed on the kidney or kidney-pancreas transplant waitlist or received a living donor kidney transplant within the first year of initiating dialysis

- Data source: [EQRS](#) and Organ Procurement and Transplant Network (OPTN)
- Technical measure title: Standardized First Kidney Transplant Waitlist Ratio for Incident Dialysis Patients
- Date updated on this website: Annually (October)

##### Patients who were on the kidney or kidney-pancreas transplant waiting list

- Data source: [EQRS](#) and OPTN
- Technical measure title: Percentage of Prevalent Patients Waitlisted
- Date updated on this website: Quarterly (January, April, July, and October)

#### Survey of patients' experiences star rating

##### Adult patients who had too much calcium in their blood

- Data source: [In-Center Hemodialysis Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems \(ICH CAHPS®\) Survey](#)
- Date updated on this website: Semi-annually (April and October)





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# Dialysis Facility Care Compare

### List of Measures (contd)



### Survey of patients' experiences

**Data source:** [In-Center Hemodialysis Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems \(ICH CAHPS®\) Survey](#)

**Technical measure titles:**

- Nephrologists' Communication and Caring
- Rating of kidney doctors
- Quality of Dialysis Center Care & Operations
- Rating of dialysis center staff
- Providing Information to Patients
- Rating of dialysis center

**Date updated on this website: Semi-annually (April and October)**

Data collection for the Spring Survey conducted in each year takes place between April and July. Data collection for the Fall Survey conducted each year takes place between November and January. The patient survey results are not included in the quality of patient care star rating; a separate star rating is calculated for these survey measures.

## IV. DATA AND MEASURE UPDATES

### Outreach Around Data and Measure Updates



The DFCC team announces data and measure refreshes through emails, national conference calls and webinars, and on the DFCC website itself. Past webinar materials are posted on the [ESRD General Information page](#).

### Data Update Schedule



Measures data on the DFCC website are typically updated, depending on the measure, in:

- January (with a 15-day preview period in November)
- April (with a 15-day preview period in February)
- July (with a 15-day preview period in May)
- October (with a 32-day preview period in July-August)

Depending on where the data come from, certain measures are updated once a year in October, twice a year in October and April, or four times a year. The measures table above includes the update schedule for each measure.

CMS shows a preview of updated data to dialysis facilities before data are available to the public on DFCC. Facilities can contact CMS during the preview period with any questions about their data.

The ICH CAHPS Survey is administered twice a year, and CMS refreshes the data on DFCC twice a year.







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### V. DFCC ON MEDICARE.GOV DATA

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#### Data Data Available on [DialysisData.org](https://dialysisdata.org)



The quarterly DFCC Reports are provided to facilities and ESRD networks. Dialysis facilities are encouraged to submit comments during the comment period by logging into the secure site on [DialysisData.org](https://dialysisdata.org) if they have questions or concerns regarding their reports. A sample report is available for public and may be downloaded from the DFCC Methods section of [DialysisData.org](https://dialysisdata.org).

#### Data Data Available on [Data.CMS.gov](https://data.cms.gov)



[Data.cms.gov](https://data.cms.gov) hosts the official datasets used by the DFCC website. The data are available for download by anyone and can be used to compare quality of care and patient experience results provided by Medicare-certified dialysis facilities nationwide.

### ACRONYMS

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**CMS**

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

**DFCC**

Dialysis Facility Care Compare

**ICH CAHPS**

In-Center Hemodialysis Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems

**ESRD**

End-Stage Renal Disease

**TEP**

Technical Expert Panel

**EQRS**

The CMS ESRD Quality Reporting System

## Where Can You Go for Help?

For questions about DFCC, please email the UM-KECC helpdesk at [dialysisdata@umich.edu](mailto:dialysisdata@umich.edu)

For questions about EQRS data submission, contact the QualityNet helpdesk at (866) 288-8912 or <http://help.mycrownweb.org>

For questions about the ICH CAHPS® Survey, contact the project team at <https://ichcahps.org>

For more information and resources including FAQs, visit the [ESRD General Information webpage](#)

