

**Building an Unbreakable Safety Net:
End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Networks Lead Emergency Preparedness Revolution**

24/7 Response System Ensures Kidney Patients Never Face Disasters Alone

When disaster strikes, kidney patients face unique life-threatening challenges. CMS' End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Network program is establishing protection for emergency preparedness to ensure uninterrupted care even in the most challenging circumstances.

ESRD Networks serve as the cornerstone of CMS's emergency response system for kidney care, coordinating comprehensive disaster planning in collaboration with regional, state, and local officials to protect vulnerable patients. Through the ESRD Kidney Health and Renal Emergency Services (KHARES) task order, Networks provide 24/7 emergency response coordination, ensuring that help is always available when patients need it most.

The program mandates annual emergency exercises to test and refine response capabilities, ensuring that when real emergencies occur, the system is battle-tested and ready to perform flawlessly. Networks receive Government Emergency Telephone System (GETS) cards, enabling seamless communication during crises when traditional phone systems may be overwhelmed or unavailable. This ensures coordination continues even under the most challenging conditions.

The Networks maintain accurate, real-time patient census data through [CMS ESRD Forms](#) (2744 A/B, 2746, and 2728), ensuring emergency responders know exactly where patients are located and what care they require. This extends to dialysis facilities and transplant centers under the Veterans Health Administration, creating a complete picture of ESRD services across all networks.

By integrating emergency preparedness into every aspect of the ESRD Network Program, CMS is building a resilient healthcare system that protects kidney patients before, during, and after disasters —ensuring that life-sustaining dialysis treatments continue no matter what challenges arise.

For kidney patients and their families, this comprehensive emergency preparedness framework provides peace of mind that their care will continue uninterrupted, even in the face of natural disasters, pandemics, or other emergencies.