

## **Four Pillars of Transformation:**

### **End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Networks' Key Priorities for Optimal Kidney Health**

*Comprehensive Strategy Addresses Choice, Coordination, Whole Health, and Data Interoperability*

CMS' End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Network program is built on four transformative priorities designed to revolutionize kidney care delivery and improve outcomes for patients across America.

The End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Network Program is a Medicare-funded initiative that supports and coordinates quality improvement efforts across the kidney care community. Operating through 18 regional contractors across the United States and its territories, the program serves as a vital intermediary between CMS and the healthcare providers and facilities that deliver care to patients with kidney failure. The ESRD Networks work collaboratively with dialysis facilities to improve treatment quality and patient outcomes, with nephrologists and nephrology care teams to enhance clinical practices and care coordination, with transplant centers to increase transplant rates and improve access to kidney transplantation, and with organ procurement organizations to promote living and deceased donor transplantation. Through these partnerships, the Networks facilitate quality improvement initiatives, provide technical assistance and education to healthcare providers, monitor facility performance data, and help resolve patient concerns by coordinating with the facilities and providers responsible for their care.

The program's goals include increasing home dialysis and transplant rates, reducing preventable hospitalizations, and ensuring equitable access to high-quality kidney care are achieved by strengthening the capacity and performance of the healthcare providers and facilities that serve kidney failure patients.

#### **Priority 1: Empower Patient and Family Choice**

The program puts control back in the hands of patients, empowering them to make informed decisions about their care. This includes:

- Providing comprehensive information about treatment options
- Supporting shared decision-making between patients and healthcare providers
- Ensuring patients understand their rights and available care pathways
- Promoting home dialysis and transplantation as preferred treatment modalities

#### **Priority 2: Improve Care Coordination**

Seamless integration across the healthcare continuum ensures patients receive coordinated, comprehensive care. The Networks focus on:

- Breaking down silos between dialysis facilities, transplant centers, and other healthcare providers
- Facilitating smooth transitions of care
- Ensuring all providers have access to complete patient information

- Coordinating with State Survey Agencies, ESRD Accrediting Organizations, and Quality Innovation Networks
- Implementing the Assess, Complement, Coordinate, Create (A3C) Model to collaborate with community initiatives and other CMS contract holders

### **Priority 3: Promote Whole Health**

Moving beyond treating kidney disease alone, the program addresses the complete well-being of kidney patients by:

- Addressing physical, mental, and social health needs
- Recognizing the interconnected nature of chronic conditions
- Supporting lifestyle modifications and preventive care
- Promoting patient wellness and quality of life
- Leveraging expertise from high-performing ESRD dialysis centers and advocacy groups

### **Priority 4: Enhance Data Interoperability**

Breaking down information silos enables better care through:

- Ensuring seamless data exchange between healthcare systems
- Improving access to complete patient health information
- Reducing duplicate testing and administrative burden
- Supporting evidence-based decision-making
- Utilizing proven data-driven approaches as a core component of quality improvement efforts

These priorities are achieved through partnership across the healthcare landscape, with high-performing facilities mentoring those needing support. The program emphasizes avoiding duplication of effort with other CMS Quality Improvement programs while maximizing impact through strategic investment in high-opportunity areas which ensures accountability and continuous progress toward optimal kidney health for all patients.