



## **Dialysis Facility Data on Medicare.gov National Provider Call Transcript**

*January 17, 2023*

**Moderator:** Hi everyone and thank you for joining today's Dialysis Facility Care Compare on Medicare.gov National Provider Call. Our presenter today will be Golden Horton, Technical Lead for Dialysis Facility Care Compare on Medicare.gov at CMS, and Dr. Stephanie Clark, the Measures Lead. Can we please go to the next slide?

Golden will begin today's presentation by covering the January 2023 Refresh of dialysis facility data. She will also discuss the April 2023 Refresh of dialysis facility data and the dry run updates to the Star ratings and measure methodology. At the end of today's presentation, CMS will hold a Q&A session. We encourage you to use the Q&A box to submit your questions. Questions not answered during the webinar will be answered and posted with the other webinar materials on the CMS.gov ESRD general information page in the coming weeks. Now, I would like to introduce Golden Horton. Golden, you may begin.

**Golden Horton:** Thank you, Allison. Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for joining today's National Provider Call. We hope you find today's call informative and engaging. With that being said, let's get started. Next slide, please.

On this slide we have a broad overview of the dialysis facility data for lease schedule, through the October 2023 Refresh. We will be referencing this table throughout the webinar. We will be going into a little more detail in the upcoming slides. Wanting to note that dates on this table are subject to change. Next slide, please.

First, we have the January 2023 Refresh of the dialysis facility data on Medicare.gov. Next slide, please.

The January 2023 Refresh will include the Dialysis Facility Care Compare clinical measures with the data reporting period of 12/2021. Next slide, please.

For a little background, typically dialysis facility data is updated quarterly on Medicare.gov, with refreshes in January, April, July, and October. Public dialysis facility data experience delays in reporting initially due to the COVID-19 pandemic. And subsequently, due to the EQRS users data reporting suspension. Because of this delay, data from the October 2020 release, which is calendar year 2019, was displayed until recently. Dialysis facility data on Medicare.gov was updated on November 16, with results from calendar year 2020. The quality of patient care Star ratings were not updated at that time. Next slide, please.

With the January 2023 Refresh, the following measures on Dialysis Facility Care Compare will be updated with data from the calendar year 2021. Adults and child patients who had enough waste removed from their blood during hemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis; adult patients who had too much calcium in their blood; frequency of a patient death, hospital admission, or readmission; frequency of transfusions; hemoglobin management; phosphorus concentrations in the blood; adult patients who received treatment through an arteriovenous fistula; adult patients who had a catheter left in the vein for at least three consecutive complete months for their regular hemodialysis treatments; measurement of nPCR for pediatric hemodialysis patients; patients who were on kidney or kidney-pancreas transplant



waiting list; transplant waitlist within a year of dialysis initiation. I would like to note that quality of care Star ratings are not being refreshed during the January Refresh. Next slide, please.

Next, we will discuss the April 2023 refresh of dialysis facility data on Medicare.gov. Next slide, please.

For the April 2023 Refresh, you can see the important highlighted dates in red. On the following slides we will go into further detail. Next slide, please.

The preview period for the April 2023 Refresh will be held from February 1-15, 2023. The reports will be posted on DialysisData.org. Authorized users may request patient lists during the first 10 days of the preview period through February 10. Next slide, please.

For the April Refresh, a subset of clinical measures will be updated as displayed here. Next slide, please.

The individual measures and individual Star ratings of ICH CAHPS Survey of Patients' Experiences will be updated, which includes kidney, doctor's communication and caring, quality of dialysis center care and operations, providing information to patients, rating of kidney doctors, rating of dialysis center staff, rating of dialysis center. The overall Star rating of ICH CAHPS Survey of Patients' Experiences are also updated within this release. Next slide, please.

I will now turn it over to Dr. Stephanie Clark to discuss the dry run of changes to measure and Star rating methodology. Stephanie.

**Stephanie Clark:** Thank you so much, Golden, and good afternoon, everyone. Next slide, please.

I'd like to review the contents of the two dry run tables that will be included with the preview report for the April 2023 Refresh, and you can see that that data reporting period will include data through December 31, 2021. Next slide, please.

In the April 2023 preview report, there will be two dry run tables. The first will preview COVID-19 adjustments that incorporates patient level, time limited, risk adjustment for the SMR, SHR, SRR, and STTrR, measures. The second table will preview the updated Star rating methodology. Next slide, please.

The SMR is defined as the ratio of the observed number of deaths for patients in a facility to the expected number of deaths that would have been expected for a facility with the same patient case mix. To account for the impact of COVID-19, we include an adjustment for time since first inpatient COVID-19 diagnosis in the risk adjustment model, flagging increased risk of mortality for 3 months post-diagnosis. Next slide, please.

The SHR is defined as the ratio of the observed number of hospitalizations for patients in a facility to the expected number of hospitalizations that would have been expected for a facility with the same patient case mix. To account for the impact of COVID-19, we included adjustment for time since first COVID-19 hospitalization in the risk adjustment model, which is broken into four categories. They are listed here and include zero to 30 days, 30-60 days, 60-180 days, and 180 days plus, which is grouped with No COVID. Next slide, please.



SRR is defined as the ratio of the number of observed index discharges from acute care hospitals to that facility that resulted in an unplanned readmission to an acute care hospital within 4-30 days of discharge to the expected number of readmissions given the discharging hospitals and the characteristics of the patients and based on a national norm. To account for the impact of COVID-19, we include an adjustment for whether the index discharge included a COVID-19 diagnosis. Next slide, please.

Finally, the STRr is defined as the ratio of the observed number of transfusions for patients in a facility to the expected number of transfusions that would have been expected for a facility with the same patient case mix. To account for the impact of COVID-19, we include an adjustment for time since first COVID diagnosis in the risk adjustment model, and that's broken into three categories which are listed here: zero to 30 days, 30-60 days, and 60 plus days. Next slide, please.

The April 2023 dry run, and October 2023 Star rating release will include resetting of Star rating distributions, reweighting of Domain 3, which includes the total Kt/V and Hypercalcemia, and the addition of two transplant waitlist measures, which are currently reported on Care Compare. The October 2023 release will use calendar year 2022 data with calendar year 2021 as the baseline. Next slide, please.

So we'll start with the resetting of the Star rating distribution. The distribution will be reset to the bottom 10 percent receiving one star, the bottom 20 percent receiving two stars, the bottom 40 percent receiving three stars, the top 20 percent receiving four stars, and the top 10 percent receiving five stars. Next is the down-weighting of Domain 3. Domain 3 of the Star rating, which includes the total Kt/V and Hypercalcemia measures will be down-weighted to 50 percent of the original weight in the overall calculation of the Star ratings. So for example, for most facilities, Domain 3 will have a weight of 1/7 and all other domains will have a weight of 2/7. Next slide, please.

Finally, we'll talk about the inclusion of transplant waitlist measures. Two transplant waitlist measures, the standardized waitlisting ratio and the percentage of prevalent patients waitlisted, will be added to the Star rating measure set and will be grouped into a separate fourth domain, which is based on factor analysis results. These additions may provide important quality information on access to transplants. Next slide, please.

In summary, the October 2023 Star rating release update using calendar year 2022 data will include a reset of the Star rating distribution; down-weighting of Domain 3, which includes the total Kt over V and hypercalcemia; and the addition of two transplant waitlist measures as a new domain. To reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Domain 1 measures, which include the SMR, SHR, SRR, and STRr as we discussed, will be risk adjusted. The risk adjustment is done at the patient level for all of those measures. More details can be found in the updated ESRD Measures Manual, and these additional risk adjustments do not significantly change the measure definitions. Next slide, please.

And with that, I will pass it back over to Allison.

**Moderator:** Okay, thank you Stephanie and Golden for presenting today. We are now going to begin the Q&A portion of today's webinar. As a reminder, you can ask questions using the Q&A box. Please note that CMS has colleagues on today from the University of Michigan Kidney Epidemiology Cost Center (UM-KECC), and RTI on to assist with answering questions. Questions that are not answered during



today's webinar will be answered and posted with the other webinar materials on the CMS.gov ESRD general information page following the webinar.

So our first question in the box here is: We did not receive a score on our CMS ESRD QIP performance year 2023 NHSN data. Our preview report was blank for that measure. Do you know what could be going on? NHSN said there was no data reported for this measure, but I ran a report in NHSN that showed it was reported. We submitted an inquiry to CMS but have not heard back yet.

**Golden Horton:** Hi Allison, thanks for the question. Unfortunately, we do not have anyone on from the QIP team that can answer that question. You can still send that question to us, and we will forward it to the QIP team to see if we can get a response for you.

**Moderator:** Okay, thank you, Golden. And then we do have one more question in the box. Can we get a link to the updated ESRD measures?

**Golden Horton:** Thanks, Allison. So just want to dig a little further so updated link to the measures is what they're asking for? Just want to make sure that we're clear on the question.

**Moderator:** I believe so, it just says updated ESRD measures.

**Golden Horton:** Colleagues from UM-KECC, do we have anything out there that we can send to them or maybe we can follow-up off the call, but just want to check in with my colleagues at UM-KECC.

**UM-KECC:** Hi Golden, it's Jennifer. I think she might mean the measures manual. In which case, yes, we can send a link.

**Moderator:** Okay, thank you. Our next question is: Do you know when the ESRD Measures Manual will be finalized as it's still showing as draft on the website?

**Golden Horton:** Thanks for the question. I'm assuming we're working on it right now, hopefully within the next couple of weeks it should be posted.

**Moderator:** Okay. Our next question: When will the 2023 performance score certificate be available?

**Golden Horton:** I believe this is another QIP question as well. We will forward that to our colleagues on the QIP team to see if you can get a response.

**Moderator:** Okay, thank you. We currently have no questions, so as a reminder, if you would like to ask a question, please use the Q&A box and we will read it here. We'll give it just a couple more seconds in case anyone has any questions. Okay, well there are no, oh, excuse us, we have one more question. Someone asks if there is a timeline for the Refresh.

**Golden Horton:** Hi Alison, thanks. So, the timeline we listed on the tables included in this presentation. We will be sharing a copy of this along with the transcript, hopefully that answers your question. Was there another part to the question in reference to the Refresh?



**Moderator:** I think they had a follow-up if it's every quarter.

**Golden Horton:** UM-KECC, you guys want to jump in just to clarify in reference to the quarters?

**UM-KECC:** Yes, this is Jennifer [inaudible], yes, the website is typically updated quarterly and as Golden said, the table at the beginning of the slides does have the timeline from now until the October Refresh.

Jennifer, this is Joe, I would add that anticipating no additional data delays or new pandemic activity that might interfere, we are hoping that we can return to the regular quarterly updates for the percentage measures and annual updates for the standardized measures and Star ratings moving forward from this series of updates.

**Moderator:** Okay, thank you. Just as a final reminder, if you do have a question, to please use the Q&A box. Okay, I am not seeing any more questions come through. So, I think we can go ahead and close out the Q&A. We will now pass it back to Golden.

**Golden Horton:** Thank you, Allison. Thank you all for joining today's webinar. I hope you found the information shared today informative. As stated earlier, please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you have any further questions, and also as stated earlier, a transcript of today's call will be posted on the ESRD information page in the coming weeks. Have a great day.