

Elevator Speeches:

ESRD Network Program Elevator Speech

1. 30-Second Version:

The ESRD Network Program is CMS's comprehensive initiative to transform kidney care for Americans with End-Stage Renal Disease. We empower patients through authentic engagement, ensure uninterrupted care during emergencies, and drive quality improvement through data-driven interventions. Our Networks serve as patient navigators and change agents, focusing on four key priorities: empowering patient choice, improving care coordination, promoting whole health, and enhancing data interoperability. By bringing together patients, providers, and stakeholders, we're creating a resilient kidney care ecosystem that improves outcomes, increases home dialysis and transplantation rates, and enhances quality of life for every kidney patient.

2. 60-Second Version:

The ESRD Network program represents CMS's commitment to revolutionizing kidney care across America. Mandated by Section 1881 of the Social Security Act, our 18 ESRD Networks serve as patient care navigators and transformation agents for the dialysis community.

We focus on four transformative priorities: First, we empower patient and family choice by ensuring every patient understands their treatment options—from home dialysis to transplantation. Second, we improve care coordination to reduce emergency room visits and hospitalizations. Third, we promote whole health by addressing physical, mental, and nutritional well-being. Fourth, we enhance data interoperability to break down information silos.

Our 18 ESRD Networks provide 24/7 emergency response coordination, ensuring continuity of care during disasters. We offer 100% of dialysis facilities and transplant centers technical assistance for data management and quality improvement. Most importantly, we put patients at the center—creating platforms where their voices drive improvements across the entire kidney care ecosystem.

Through authentic patient engagement, data-driven interventions, and collaborative partnerships, we're achieving measurable results: increased home dialysis utilization, higher transplantation rates, reduced hospitalizations, and improved quality of life for individuals living with kidney disease.

3. 90-Second Version (Comprehensive):

The ESRD Network Program is CMS's flagship initiative for transforming kidney care delivery across the United States. Established under Section 1881 of the Social Security Act and aligned with the Advancing American Kidney Health Executive Order, our 18 regional Networks serve over 700,000 Americans living with End-Stage Renal Disease.

Our 18 ESRD Networks act as conveners, motivators, and change agents—serving as the bridge between patients, dialysis facilities, transplant centers, and the broader healthcare community. We're not just improving care; we're optimizing how kidney care is delivered.

Our four key priorities drive everything we do:

- First, Empowering Patient Choice. We ensure every patient receives comprehensive education about all treatment options and support their decisions about home dialysis, in-center dialysis, or transplantation based on their personal life goals and values.
- Second, Improving Care Coordination. We reduce emergency room visits and hospitalizations through proactive care management and systematic communication between providers, transforming reactive emergency care into planned interventions.
- Third, Promoting Whole Health. We address the complete well-being of kidney patients —physical health, mental health support, nutrition awareness, and even vocational rehabilitation to help patients maintain meaningful engagement in their communities and workforce.
- Fourth, Enhancing Data Interoperability. We provide technical assistance to 100% of facilities for data management, enabling real-time insights that drive quality improvement while reducing administrative burden.

ESRD Kidney Health Analytics & Responsive Emergency Support (KHARES) Elevator Speeches

1. 30- second version:

End-Stage Renal Disease — or ESRD — affects hundreds of thousands of Americans who depend on dialysis to survive. CMS supports a national network of ESRD programs to improve patient care, reduce hospitalizations, and empower patients in their health journey. Within that ecosystem, ESRD KHARES ensures that when disasters or emergencies strike, dialysis patients never lose access to life-sustaining treatment — coordinating across all 18 ESRD Network service areas to keep the most vulnerable patients safe.

2. 60- second version:

End-Stage Renal Disease is a life-altering condition where the kidneys can no longer function on their own. Patients rely on dialysis — often multiple times a week — just to survive. CMS oversees a national ESRD Network program spanning across 18 service areas across the U.S., focused on improving care quality, increasing home dialysis and transplant rates, reducing hospitalizations, and empowering patients and families.

Supporting the 18 ESRD Networks mission is the ESRD KHARES — CMS's dedicated emergency response program for the ESRD community. KHARES ensures that when natural disasters, public health crises, or other emergencies occur, dialysis patients maintain uninterrupted access to care. Through data analytics, emergency preparedness planning, national training, and coordination with federal and state partners, KHARES is the national safety net that ensures no dialysis patient is left behind.

3. 90-second version:

End-Stage Renal Disease — ESRD — is one of the most serious chronic conditions in America. When the kidneys fail, patients must receive dialysis treatments multiple times a week to survive. CMS manages a national ESRD Network program across 18 service areas, with a mission to

improve patient outcomes, empower patient and family choice, promote whole health, and enhance care coordination. These networks serve as conveners, motivators, and change agents — leveraging data, technology, and community partnerships to drive quality improvement across the dialysis community.

But what happens when a hurricane hits, or a public health emergency disrupts normal care? That's where ESRD KHARES comes in. KHARES — the ESRD Kidney Health Analytics & Responsive Emergency Support contractor — is a CMS-funded initiative specifically designed to protect patients with ESRD during emergencies. Because missing even a single dialysis treatment can be life-threatening, KHARES works proactively to ensure continuity of care before, during, and after crises.

KHARES coordinates across all 18 ESRD Network service areas, partnering with federal and state agencies, dialysis facilities, and community stakeholders. The program uses data-driven decision-making, environmental scanning, and national reporting to continuously improve emergency response strategies. It also invests in education — hosting national conferences, stakeholder engagements, and training initiatives that build resilience across the entire ESRD community.

Together, the 18 ESRD Networks and KHARES contractors represent CMS's comprehensive commitment to ESRD patients — not just improving their everyday care but ensuring they are protected when it matters most. Because for dialysis patients, preparation and coordination aren't just best practices — they're lifesaving.