

# Dialysis Facility Compare Measure Updates

**August 31, 2016**  
**1:00 PM ET**

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# Overview

- » CMS' goal is to improve transparency and communication by providing on-going updates during provider calls.
- » National calls in July and October have commonly been used to address changes to Dialysis Facility Compare (DFC) and to answer common questions received as part of the preview period.
- » Today's call is to review updates to the endorsed National Quality Forum (NQF) measures.
- » We will also provide an update on plans to improve transparency.

## Measure Updates

- » In response to feedback from the renal community, DFC revised the following measures:
  - Kt/V
  - Vascular Access
    - Fistula; catheter greater than 90 days
  - Hypercalcemia
  - Standardized Readmission Ratio (SRR)

The National Quality Forum (NQF) endorsed these changes in 2015.

## Kt/V Measure Update

- » Revision: CROWNWeb as primary data source
  - The revision incorporates the requirement that the patient must be assigned to the dialysis facility for the entire month, which is determined through CROWNWeb.
    - This requirement effectively removes from the measure calculation most patients who would be considered transient.
  - The measure uses all available CROWNWeb and Medicare claims Kt/V data for patients reported by the dialysis facility. Medicare claims are used if CROWNWeb data is missing or reports out of range values.

## Kt/V Measure Update

- » Revision: Updated definition of frequent dialysis for pediatric patients to align with adult measure requirements of four or more sessions per week (previously five or more)

# Kt/V Measure Implementation

- » Definition of “out of range” values revised for DFC calculations
  - The revision:
    - Removes lower limits
    - Raises upper limits from 2.5 to 5.0 for HD Kt/V and from 2.5 to 8.5 for PD Kt/V
    - Increases limits to account for reasonable values while still excluding possible erroneous values

# Vascular Access (Fistula; Catheter Greater Than 90 Days) Measure Update

- » Revision: Patients must have end-stage renal disease (ESRD) for more than 90 days to be included in the measure
  - The revision:
    - Aligns with other measures—including the Kt/V and hypercalcemia measures—and aims to recognize that establishing permanent vascular access takes weeks to months.
    - Improves attributing vascular access statuses to the appropriate dialysis facility by excluding incident patients until after 90 days.

# Standardized Readmission Ratio (SRR) Measure Update

- » Revision: Exclude readmissions within the first three days after index discharges
  - The revision:
    - Reflects the NQF-endorsed version of the measure, and was made as a compromise during the NQF endorsement process.
    - Aims to exclude readmissions that may occur before the dialysis facility has a chance to see a patient after the index hospital discharge.



# Hypercalcemia Measure Update

- » Revision: Include missing values in denominator
  - The original measure calculation excluded patients with missing values, which created a potentially inappropriate incentive for dialysis facilities to not report calcium data.

# Improving Transparency

- » Lack of prior notification of measure updates
  - CMS updated measures implemented on DFC in October 2016 to match new NQF-endorsed specifications.
    - This is consistent with previous measure updates.
    - However, it does not reflect the degree of transparency CMS wishes to provide.
- » Process modification
  - CMS will modify its measure implementation process next year to ensure prior notification of measure changes
    - Details will be provided during CMS' annual National Provider Call in October.
    - These changes will incorporate the ESRD Measures Manual.

# Questions

## Helpdesk

- » For additional information about the Star Ratings methodology or measure specifications, please email the University of Michigan Kidney Epidemiology and Cost Center Helpdesk at [dialysisdata@umich.edu](mailto:dialysisdata@umich.edu).

## **Thank you!**

The next National Provider Call to discuss the updated Dialysis Facility Compare website will be held in mid-October. CMS will share more information as it becomes available.