



**Center for Clinical Standards and Quality/ Survey & Certification Group**

---

**Ref: S&C: 13-01-ESRD**

**DATE:** November 2, 2012

**TO:** State Survey Agency Directors

**FROM:** Director  
Survey and Certification Group

**SUBJECT:** The Roll-Out of the New End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Core Survey Process

**ACTION:** Please send Training Enrollment Requests as Soon as Possible (See page 3)

**Memorandum Summary**

- **Core Survey Pilot:** ESRD surveyors in 11 states completed more than 100 surveys during the pilot phase of the new ESRD Core Survey during July through September 2012. The Core-trained surveyors in the pilot States may continue to use the Core Survey process.
- **New Process Results:** Initial data analysis shows continued effectiveness while reducing survey time.
- **Training Plan:** National training on the new ESRD Core Survey process starts November 28, 2012:
  - The 3-day ESRD Core Conversion Survey Course is for experienced ESRD surveyors.
  - The 4-day ESRD Basic Technical Core Course is for new ESRD surveyors.
- **State Procedures:** All ESRD surveyors need to designate their surveys as either “Traditional” or “Core” in Automated Survey Processing Environment (ASPEN).
- **STAR Update Schedule:** Updates to the ESRD computer-based survey, Surveyor Technical Assistant for Renal (STAR), will be in two phases:
  - STAR Lite will highlight Core elements and will be available summer 2013.
  - STAR Brite will be a total conversion to the Core survey process and will be available at a later date.
- **Implementation Support:** In addition to traditional support for survey decisions through the State Agencies and Regional Offices, a specialized mailbox will provide additional support: [ESRDCoreSurvey@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:ESRDCoreSurvey@cms.hhs.gov).

**Background:**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will be officially rolling out the new ESRD Core Survey process on November 28, 2012, when we begin training the ESRD surveyors in the new survey process. The new ESRD Core Survey process is the first official Survey and

Certification Group (SCG) Quality Assurance Efficiency and Effectiveness (QAE&E) Initiative. The goal of these initiatives is to increase the efficient use of survey resources while maintaining strong and monitored effectiveness of the survey process. Current health care practice has demonstrated a strong correlation between efficiency and effectiveness, and we want to take advantage of that trend in the survey and certification program when possible.

The new ESRD Core Survey process is a risk-based approach to ESRD surveys, with the determinations of “risk” to ESRD patients based upon data (from ESRD surveys and ESRD literature) and opinions (from ESRD surveyors, ESRD patient leaders, technical experts, ESRD Network leaders, and professional and organizational leaders). The new ESRD Core Survey process focuses on 1/3 of the ESRD survey tags as the most critical tags for ESRD safety and quality risks. In addition, the new ESRD Core Survey Process does the following:

- Incorporates a “Culture of Safety” into a robust Quality Assessment and Program Improvement review;
- Utilizes Infection Control Checklists developed jointly by the Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, and CMS; and
- Promotes the use of ESRD data to focus on areas of potential risk within each ESRD facility.

### **Pilot Testing of the New ESRD Core Survey Process**

Eleven States (AZ, CA, DE, FL, MA, MI, NJ, NC, PA, TN, TX) pilot tested the new ESRD Core Survey process and tools for three months between July and September 2012. Results of the ESRD Core pilot program indicate that the ESRD surveyors like the new survey process; that the time needed to complete the new survey process decreases; and that surveys maintain their effectiveness. Our roll-out plan for this survey process is based upon feedback from the pilot surveyors who told us that while the new ESRD survey process represented a significant cultural change for surveyors, the outcomes with the new survey process were positive.

### **Training for the New ESRD Core Survey Process**

CMS has developed two new surveyor training courses: one for new ESRD surveyors and a second for current ESRD surveyors. All future ESRD surveyor training programs will incorporate training for the new ESRD Core Survey process as follows:

- New ESRD surveyors will attend the ESRD Basic Technical Core Training Course. This is a four-day course that includes hands-on demonstrations of in-center dialysis delivery systems, home dialysis delivery systems, water treatment rooms/equipment, and reprocessing systems/equipment. In order to participate as a qualified member of the ESRD team, new surveyors need to attend this course, as specified in the Missions & Priority Document.
- Experienced ESRD surveyors must attend one of the following courses:
  - The 4-day ESRD Basic Technical Core Training Course (highly recommended for ESRD surveyors who have not attended a Basic Technical Course since October 2008); or

- The 3-day ESRD Core Conversion Training Course which focuses surveyors on the critical aspects of the new ESRD Core Survey process.

We will train new ESRD surveyors (or ESRD surveyors who have not been to an ESRD Basic Technical since October 1, 2008) in 4 offerings of courses during FY 2013. The offerings are scheduled as follows:

- December 3-6, 2012 in Minneapolis, MN
- February 25-28, 2013 in Carlsbad, CA
- June 10-13, 2013 in Minneapolis, MN
- September 9-12, 2013 in Denver, CO

States may register surveyors for these Core Basic Technical Core courses in LMS.

We will train experienced ESRD surveyors, in 4 offerings of courses during FY 2013. The offerings are scheduled as follows:

- November 28-30, 2012 in Minneapolis, MN
- February 20-22, 2013 in Carlsbad, CA
- June 5-7, 2013 in Minneapolis, MN
- September 4-7, 2013 in Denver, CO

CMS would like to roll out the ESRD Core Survey on a whole State-by-State basis. Therefore, CMS will train together the experienced ESRD surveyors in each respective State. Central Office (CO) will schedule surveyors for training, giving priority for scheduling to the states that participated in the pilot. Once 90% of the surveyors in a states are trained, the state may begin using the Core Survey Process. For the ESRD Core Conversion courses, States should complete the attached “ESRD Core Training Request” Form and return the Form to the [ESRDCoreSurvey@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:ESRDCoreSurvey@cms.hhs.gov) mailbox. CO will notify each State about these determinations as quickly as possible.

### **Connecting the Traditional or new ESRD Core Survey Process in ASPEN**

To indicate that a particular survey is a Core survey in ASPEN, please cite Tag “0000,” Initial Comments. At the beginning of your Initial Comments, add the following text, including the square brackets: **[CORE]**.

### **Conversions of the Surveyor Technical Assistant for Renal (STAR) for the Core Survey Process**

STAR will be converted to the Core Survey process in two phases: STAR Lite (conversion and highlighting of Core Survey elements) and STAR Brite (complete conversion to the Core Survey process). We expect the STAR Lite conversion to be completed in the summer of 2013. At this point, there is no scheduled date for STAR Brite.

**Support for the Core Survey Process**

ESRD surveyors will continue to work with their State Agencies and Regional Offices for support for their ESRD survey decisions. The ESRD mailbox for Core Survey issues ([ESRDCoreSurvey@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:ESRDCoreSurvey@cms.hhs.gov)) will continue to provide additional support to surveyors, States, and Regions. All ESRD Core Survey information and tools will be published on the CMS Dialysis S&C Web site.

For additional information contact the ESRD Mailbox: [ESRDCoreSurvey@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:ESRDCoreSurvey@cms.hhs.gov).

**Effective Date:** Immediately. This information should be communicated with all survey and certification staff, their managers and the State/Regional Office training coordinators within 30 days of this memorandum.

/s/

Thomas E. Hamilton

Attachment

cc: Survey and Certification Regional Office Management

**ESRD Core Training Request for Experienced ESRD Surveyors**

(Return this form to the [ESRDCoreSurvey@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:ESRDCoreSurvey@cms.hhs.gov) Mailbox)

Name of State:

State Contact Person (name, email address, phone):

Experienced ESRD surveyors must attend either the 3-day ESRD Core Conversion Training Course which focuses surveyors on the critical aspects of the new ESRD Core Survey process OR the 4-day ESRD Basic Technical/Core Training for new ESRD surveyors. The 4-day course is highly recommended for experienced ESRD surveyors who have not attended a Basic Technical Course since October 1, 2008.

ESRD Surveyor Name	ESRD Basic Technical/Core Training or ESRD Core Conversion

Use another page for additional surveyors.

What is your preferred date and location for the training indicated above?

- Nov. 28-30, 2012: ESRD Core Conversion Training (Minneapolis, MN)
- Dec. 3-6, 2012: ESRD Basic Technical/Core Training (Minneapolis, MN)
- Feb. 20-22, 2013: ESRD Core Conversion Training (Carlsbad/San Diego, CA)
- Feb. 25-28, 2013: ESRD Basic Technical/Core Training (Carlsbad/San Diego, CA)
- June 5-7, 2013: ESRD Core Conversion Training (Minneapolis, MN)
- June 10-13, 2013: ESRD Basic Technical/Core Training (Minneapolis, MN)
- Sept. 4-6, 2013: ESRD Core Conversion Training (Denver, CO)
- Sept. 9-12, 2013: ESRD Basic/Technical/Core Training (Denver, CO)

Additional Comments: