



Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

A monthly report by Benesch on the
Dialysis & Nephrology Industry

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October 9, 2024

Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

Calendar of Events

OCTOBER 17–19, 2024

CV Transforum Fall '24

Denver, CO

For more information, please click [here](#).

OCTOBER 23–27, 2024

ASN Kidney Week 2024

San Diego Convention Center

San Diego, CA

For more information, please click [here](#).

FEBRUARY 7–9, 2025

ASDIN: 21st Annual Scientific Meeting

Grapevine, TX

For more information, please click [here](#).

FEBRUARY 16–19, 2025

American Venous Forum: Annual Meeting

Atlanta, GA

For more information, please click [here](#).

MARCH 29–APRIL 2, 2025

SIR: 2025 Annual Scientific Meeting

Nashville, TN

For more information, please click [here](#).

APRIL 3–6, 2025

Renal Physicians Association 2025 Annual Meeting

Las Vegas, NV

For more information, please click [here](#).

APRIL 23–25, 2025

RHA Virtual Spring Meeting

For more information, please click [here](#).

MAY 1–3, 2025

OEIS 12th Annual National Scientific Meeting

Orlando, FL

For more information, please click [here](#).

MAY 1–4, 2025

ANNA: 2025 National Symposium

Portland, OR

For information, please click [here](#).

NOVEMBER 5–9, 2025

ASN Kidney Week 2025

Houston, TX

For more information, please click [here](#).



Please contact us if you would like to post information regarding our upcoming events or if you'd like to guest author an article for this newsletter.

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Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

SAVE THE DATE

Benesch Healthcare+ Fifth Annual Nephrology & Dialysis Conference



June 26, 2025

8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Cocktail reception to follow

Sheraton Grand Riverwalk

301 East North Water Street | Chicago, IL

Please join us for this full-day conference addressing business and legal issues facing nephrology and dialysis providers. Hear from industry leaders discussing current and future trends in care delivery, business and payment models and legal and regulatory issues.

Please contact MEGAN THOMAS (mthomas@beneschlaw.com) for more information about this event or if you require assistance.

Invitation to follow.

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Healthcare+**

www.beneschlaw.com

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Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

Nephrology and Dialysis

SEPTEMBER 23, 2024

House committee postponement of health bills likely spells end of debate on Medicare payments for physicians

The House Ways and Means Committee has postponed discussions on several healthcare bills, including those related to physician pay, due to scheduling conflicts and disagreements over legislative language. This delay affects the timeline for potential changes in compensation structures as physicians face a fifth straight decline in reimbursement rates from Medicare. With action on the fee schedule unlikely prior to the Nov. elections, the issue may have to wait until the lame-duck session of Congress early next year. The committee's decision comes amid broader debates on healthcare funding and policy reforms and highlights ongoing challenges in reaching consensus on legislation.

SOURCE: Becker's Hospital Review

SEPTEMBER 18, 2024

AKF on Capitol Hill to advocate for bills supporting rare kidney disease research, treatment

The Rare Kidney Disease Action Network (RKDAN), an initiative of the American Kidney Fund (AKF), met with members of Congress to elicit support for two bills. The first, [H.R. 6790](#), would create centers of excellence to study the causes, diagnosis, progression and treatment of rare kidney diseases and increase public awareness, particularly in rural and underserved communities. The bill would also require HHS to conduct a study on testing, preventative care, precision medicine and treatment for rare kidney disease. [H.R. 3876](#) and its companion legislation, [S. 2323](#), would guarantee direct reimbursement of genetic counselor services by Medicare. The industry, which advises patients about how their genetic makeup could impact their health or treatment choices, isn't recognized as healthcare providers by Medicare.

Related: [NKF, Healthy.io offer free kidney disease testing at Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's annual legislative conference](#) — Healthy.io

SOURCE: American Kidney Fund

Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

SEPTEMBER 11, 2024

Bipartisan Senate bill seeks to protect dialysis patients from Marietta court decision

Sens. Bill Cassidy (R.-LA), Cory Booker (D.-NJ) and Martin Heinrich (D.-NM) introduced a bill to safeguard access to private healthcare for individuals with ESRD. The act responds to the 2022 SCOTUS ruling in *Marietta v. DaVita*, which permits private health plans to exclude kidney care services. The co-sponsors contend that'll push ESRD patients onto Medicare and cause coverage disruptions and financial burdens. The legislation, a companion to a bipartisan bill **introduced** in the House of Representatives, aims to ensure ESRD patients maintain their healthcare plans during treatment.

SOURCE: Senator Bill Cassidy

SEPTEMBER 16, 2024

Expert suggests MA best option for ESKD patients, but access to care an issue

Dr. Eugene Lin, assistant professor of medicine at the Keck School of Medicine at USC, highlights the growth of MA plans among patients with ESKD but explains there are pros and cons to the strategy. He notes MA plans offer improved healthcare access, lower drug costs, and additional benefits like vision and dental without needing Medigap coverage. However, Lin says patients' access to specialized care may suffer due to narrow networks, adding MA plans sometimes require prior authorizations to rein in costs. He stresses the importance of educating both providers and patients about MA plans to ensure they understand the trade-offs involved in ESKD care.

SOURCE: Healio (sub. rec.)

SEPTEMBER 13, 2024

Proposed rule introduced to enable people with HIV to receive donated organs more readily

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is proposing a rule to remove clinical research and institutional review board requirements for the transplantation of kidneys and livers from donors with HIV to recipients with HIV. It's believed the change will speed up the approval process for transplants, increase the participation of transplant centers and expand access to organ transplantation for people with HIV. The rule is subject to public comment until Oct. 15 and is part of the Biden Administration's efforts to reduce stigma and health disparities around organ transplantation.

SOURCE: HIV.gov

Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

SEPTEMBER 17, 2024

DaVita's nationwide community health tour underway with free health screenings, kidney care education

The third annual [DaVita Health Tour](#) got underway Sept. 24 and continues until Nov. 16, visiting eight urban centers across the U.S. In collaboration with the American Diabetes Association, the initiative provides free health screenings and chronic disease education aimed primarily at underserved populations who may be suffering from diabetes or CKD. Among the services available are:

- A glucose test via fingerstick to understand diabetes risk;
- A blood pressure reading for hypertension awareness;
- Measurements to calculate body mass index and assess obesity risk;
- An optional blood draw to offer more detailed measurement of kidney function; and
- A personal and confidential patient results review.

SOURCE: DaVita

SEPTEMBER 3, 2024

DaVita reports increased revenue in Q2; remains concerned by patient mortality rates

DaVita states revenue per dialysis treatment in Q2 was \$390.22, up 4% YoY from the same period in 2023. It attributes the positive revenue figures to seasonal improvements relating to patients meeting coinsurance and deductibles as well as annual rate increases. DaVita notes treatment growth was impacted by the decision to close three clinics, missed treatments from tropical storms and stubborn patient mortality rates that haven't returned to pre-pandemic levels. In the first half of the year, the company provided dialysis services to 265,000 patients at 3,124 outpatient clinics, 85% of them in the U.S.

SOURCE: Healio (sub. rec.)

SEPTEMBER 13, 2024

DaVita names long-time executive as COO; former office holder staying on with company

[David Maughan](#) was hired by the dialysis provider in 2006 and was a full-time SVP for the past five years, overseeing DaVita's hospital and home treatment businesses. He replaces Mike Staffieri, who served as the company's COO for the past 11 years and will stay on as COO emeritus.

SOURCE: DaVita

Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

SEPTEMBER 24, 2024

Fresenius appoints former GSK exec as head of IR

[Nick Stone](#) is replacing Markus Georgi, who left Fresenius after nine years. Stone has considerable experience with pharmaceutical companies, having spent the past three years as SVP and head of investor relations at GSK. Prior to that, he fulfilled a number of roles at AstraZeneca over a 16-year period. In welcoming him to the leadership team, Fresenius CEO Michael Sen cites Stone's "many years of experience in the healthcare industry and his excellent network in the international capital markets."

SOURCE: Fresenius

SEPTEMBER 4, 2024

Fresenius introduces hemodialysis machines with training software for home users

Fresenius Medical Care (FMC) says the latest version of the NxStage home hemodialysis (HHD) system, [VersiHD with GuideMe Software](#), is designed to shorten the training period for patients or caregivers. It features pictorial-based guidance for setup, treatment and troubleshooting of the HHD technology. The interface accommodates a range of learning styles to ease retention and incorporates static picture instructions so patients can study at their own pace. FMC is introducing the system in the U.S. first, with a global rollout expected in the coming year. Meanwhile, the company reports 14,000 NxStage HHD machines are in operation in the U.S., either through Fresenius standalone clinics or other providers.

SOURCE: Fresenius Medical Care

SEPTEMBER 4, 2024

Fresenius, DaVita backing Boston biotech's research into human-compatible engineered

[e-Genesis](#) developed a genetically edited pig kidney, which was transplanted into a live human patient with ESKD in Mar. Building off that success, the company raised \$191 million in Series D funding to advance its lead product candidate, EGEN-2784, to a first-in-human study for kidney transplant. Proceeds will also be used to finance pipeline programs and scale production. Among the investors in e-Genesis are Fresenius Medical Care and DaVita.

SOURCE: e-Genesis

Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

AUGUST 29, 2024

Humana signs value-based kidney care agreement with Evergreen covering 17 states

Humana MA members can access [Evergreen Nephrology](#)'s teams of professionals who work with nephrologists to provide individualized, whole-person care to those with CKD and ESKD. The service is offered in the 17 states in which Nashville-based Evergreen operates and aligns with Humana's emphasis on value-based care in nephrology.

SOURCE: Humana

SEPTEMBER 24, 2024

Humana expands value-based care agreement with Interwell to include FL

With the addition of FL, Boston-based [Interwell Health](#) provides value-based care to Humana MA members with CKD in 14 states and with ESKD in 39 states. The patient-centric healthcare model offered by Interwell includes access to network nephrologists, renal care coordinators and in-home virtual support from dietitians, nurses, social workers, pharmacists and care coordinators. Meanwhile, on the second anniversary of its founding, Interwell [has](#) over 2,000 nephrologists in all 50 states and PR. As well, the company reports in 2024 it provided:

- Forty-one percent more transplants;
- One hundred forty percent more optimal starts to dialysis; and
- Fifty percent higher home dialysis rate.

SOURCE: Interwell Health

Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

SEPTEMBER 5, 2024

Strive Health claims value-based care model available in all 50 states; leads to more home dialysis

[Strive Health](#) says it serves over 121,000 people with CKD and ESKD and partners with over 6,500 providers in all 50 states. Clinical results suggest Strive's emphasis on value-based kidney care led to:

- A 77% increase in home dialysis adoption;
- A 58% optimal start rate where patients have a dialysis access placed before they begin treatment; and
- A 49% reduction in hospitalizations.

As well, Strive's programs resulted in a 50% reduction in the number of patients with 40% eGFR decline.

SOURCE: Strive Health

SEPTEMBER 20, 2024

Gold Kidney Health Plan expanding in AZ, FL; partners with Cleveland Clinic

The Scottsdale, AZ-based MA health plan says in 2025, its footprint in FL will increase from nine markets to 22 counties, while in AZ, its services will be available in eight counties, up from four currently. [Gold Kidney Health Plan](#) offers MA plans that include prescription drug coverage, preventative care, access to healthcare providers and supplemental benefits. In a related development, [Cleveland Clinic](#) is [partnering](#) with the Gold Kidney Health Plan for MA members in AZ and FL.

SOURCE: Gold Kidney Health Plan

SEPTEMBER 6, 2024

Northwest Kidney Centers opens flagship clinic in downtown Seattle

The location, adjacent to the [Harborview Medical Center](#), has 46 dialysis stations, nine home dialysis training rooms and community education space. [Northwest Kidney Centers](#) can serve more than 300 in-center dialysis patients and provide training, education and monthly support to 125 patients who dialyze at home. The opening of the \$57-million facility enables consolidation of the company's operations at three other dialysis centers in downtown Seattle. Northwest adds the clinic includes the nation's first kidney palliative care program, as well as free classes supporting those impacted by CKD.

SOURCE: Northwest Kidney Centers

Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

SEPTEMBER 18, 2024

ASN guidance on obesity management in kidney disease includes AOM, MBS options

The American Society of Nephrology (ASN) **released** a kidney health guidance on obesity management aimed at nephrologists and kidney health professionals. It provides an overview of tools for obesity management and their clinical implementation. It stresses the importance of personalized health goals, a multidisciplinary care team and multiple interventions for safe weight loss. Among the treatments highlighted are anti-obesity medications (AOM), metabolic and bariatric surgery (MBS) and lifestyle modifications. ASN emphasizes the impact of obesity on kidney disease and care highlights the need for integrated, multidisciplinary approaches to improve life quality and health outcomes.

SOURCE: HCP Live

SEPTEMBER 1, 2024

Research suggests marginal lifespan gain for elderly kidney failure patients from dialysis treatment

A **study** led by Stanford University found over a three-year period, the gain in lifespan for elderly patients (mean age=78) with kidney failure who opted for dialysis over medical monitoring was 77 days. Over the length of the study, those who underwent dialysis spent nearly 14 fewer days at home than the cohort who didn't receive any treatment. The Stanford team concludes although there's a modest gain in lifespan for the oldest patients with kidney failure, that has to be balanced with their quality of life desires.

SOURCE: The New York Times (sub. rec.)

Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

SEPTEMBER 20, 2024

Study links neighborhood socioeconomic status with mortality, heart failure risks in patients with kidney disease

University of Illinois Department of Medicine enrolled 3,197 patients with CKD who had no cardiovascular disease at baseline and found over a median nine-year period there were 465 incident heart failure events, 297 myocardial infarctions and 891 deaths from all causes. Digging deeper, researchers discovered:

- Patients with an eGFR of 45 or higher in the lowest neighborhood socioeconomic status quartile had a higher heart failure risk versus those in the highest quartile. The association wasn't significant among those with an eGFR of less than 45;
- There was no association between neighborhood socioeconomic status and myocardial infarction overall. However, patients with less than a high school education had a higher myocardial infarction risk; and
- In patients younger than 60 years, there was a significant link between the lowest neighborhood socioeconomic status quartile and the risk for death.

Related: [Patient education, tailored support can promote home dialysis in certain adults](#) — Healio (sub. rec.)

SOURCE: Healio (sub. rec.)

SEPTEMBER 24, 2024

OIG: Greater oversight of remote patient monitoring will prevent improper Medicare billing

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) [notes](#) Medicare covers remote patient monitoring (RPM) of physiological data for any chronic or acute condition, including CKD. Digital devices uploading data at least 16 days out of every 30 are eligible for reimbursement. However, with the increased uptake of RPM by healthcare providers, OIG says CMS must implement greater safeguards to ensure RPM is used and billed appropriately in Medicare. It also recommends CMS:

- Require RPM be ordered and that information about the ordering provider be included on claims and encounter data;
- Develop methods to identify what health data are being monitored;
- Conduct provider education about the billing of RPM; and
- Identify and monitor companies that bill for RPM.

CMS states it'll take into consideration all of OIG's recommendations.

SOURCE: Office of Inspector General

Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

OCTOBER 1, 2024

RHA chooses Emplify Health clinical ops director as president; names two board members

[Bridget Pfaff](#) has been clinical operations director at [Emplify Health by Gundersen](#) for 13 years, overseeing four outpatient facilities, a home-only program, an acute inpatient facility, and a nephrology clinic. Pfaff has been actively involved in the RHA for 13 years, serving on several committees and was elected president of the organization at its AGM on Sept. 20. The RHA also named two at-large directors to its board:

1. Kristi Wells, who has 12 years of experience in dialysis and manages four dialysis units at [Greenfield Health System](#); and
2. [Stacy Vice](#), who has 22 years of experience in the dialysis field and is VP of clinical quality and compliance at [Rendevor Dialysis](#).

SOURCE: RHA

OCTOBER 1, 2024

ANNA introduces fellowship to recognize contributions by nephrology nurses

The Fellow of the American Nephrology Nurses Association (FANNA) program recognizes significant contributions to the profession in the areas of education, research, advocacy and leadership. Nominations for the inaugural class of ANNA fellows close on Nov. 30, with the induction ceremony planned during the [2025 ANNA National Symposium](#).

SOURCE: ANNA

Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

VAC, ASC and Office-Based Labs

SEPTEMBER 10, 2024

Laminate reports CMS granting reimbursement for extravascular-supported fistula technology

Israel tech firm [Laminate Medical Technologies](#) says CMS approved its [VasQ](#) device for transitional pass-through (TPT) payment, effective Oct. 1. This payment allows for incremental Medicare reimbursement for the creation of an extravascular-supported fistula with VasQ. The TPT program aims to provide patients with quicker access to innovative devices like VasQ, which is designed to improve AVF function for hemodialysis patients by reinforcing the artery-vein connection. The CMS decision was influenced by significant advocacy from kidney patients.

SOURCE: Laminate Medical Technologies

SEPTEMBER 13, 2024

Bill before House could impact how ASCs structure billing practices

The bipartisan bill [co-sponsored](#) by Reps. Greg Murphy (R.-NC), John Joyce (R.-PA), Jimmy Panetta (D.-CA), Raul Ruiz (D.-CA) and Kim Schrier (D.-WA) reinforces the No Surprises Act passed in 2020 aimed at greater transparency in medical billing. The latest legislation would:

- Increase penalties for non-compliance of statutory payment deadlines;
- Bring parity between penalties imposed against parties that are non-compliant with statutory patient protection provisions; and
- Augment the transparency of reporting systems.

The bill could lead to adjustments in how ASCs negotiate contracts with payers and structure their billing practices.

SOURCE: Becker's ASC Review

OCTOBER 7, 2024

Jason Greis joins BackTable VI Podcast

Benesch's own Jason Gries was a guest on the BackTable VI Podcast. He provides a comprehensive overview of starting an ASC or converting an existing OBL into an ASC. Gries and host Dr. Krishna Mannava explore the operational, financial, and legal intricacies of starting an ASC.

SOURCE: BackTable Podcast

Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

For more information regarding our nephrology, dialysis
and office-based lab experience, or
if you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please contact:

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