

Can You Ever Be Discharged from Dialysis? *Yes, You Can!*

Every person with end stage renal disease (ESRD) has a right to life-sustaining dialysis treatments. However, Medicare outlines four very special situations that allow a facility to discharge someone. When this happens, the patient must find another out-patient dialysis center. These four reasons are:

1. Not paying for treatment when coverage is available.

- This is when someone qualifies for insurance, like Medicare or Medicaid, but chooses not to make the appropriate arrangements.
- If a patient chooses not to get insurance and is unable to pay for care out of his or her own pocket, the facility can give a 30-day notice and then discharge the patient.

2. A medical need that the facility cannot manage.

- On rare occasion, a patient's medical needs may be above the capabilities of the clinic, such as patients who need a tracheostomy tube or a ventilator. Dialysis clinics should have written policy documenting any medical needs they cannot support. If the dialysis unit cannot meet a patient's medical needs, the patient will be contacted by a member of his or her care team to discuss the issue.

3. Ongoing disruptive behavior in the clinic.

- This is ongoing behavior that makes it difficult for the facility to care for any patient.
- If a patient displays ongoing disruptive behavior (e.g., loud outbursts, name calling, or shouting; pulling needles in a way that endangers other patients), the facility is required to notify the patient of the risk for discharge and try and work through the issue.
- If discharge is the only option, the facility must give the patient a 30-day notice and try to help him or her find another place to get treatment.

4. Making a threat.

- A threat can be anything said or done that makes someone else feel scared or intimidated.
- A threat can be something someone says or does that can lead to harm of staff and other patients.
- If a patient makes a threat and/or acts on that threat by hurting anyone, not only can the clinic call the police, but they are also allowed to stop taking care of the patient immediately and not allow him or her back.

It's important you know your rights and your responsibilities as a patient. If you have any questions or concerns about this, or any part of your care, please reach out to the Network at 800.783.8818. We're here to help!

Please be aware that if you are involuntarily discharged from a treatment center, it can very difficult to find another dialysis facility. Other facilities have the right to review medical records and choose if they will accept or deny an admission into their facility.