

PATIENT EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT REPRESENTATIVE (PEER) PROGRAM



WHAT IS THE PEER PROGRAM?

Thank you for your interest in becoming a PEER volunteer for your dialysis facility. The PEER Program was developed by patients for patients. The goal of the PEER program is for dialysis patients to benefit from peer-to-peer support which can improve quality of life and participation in their healthcare. By participating in the PEER program, you will work closely with your facility representative and help other patients by sharing your valuable patient experience.

This booklet is intended to:

- Provide information about the federal End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Program and the ESRD Networks
- Orient you to your role as a PEER

WHAT ARE ESRD NETWORKS?

In 1972, Congress established the ESRD Program to provide payment for dialysis and transplant services through Medicare. The program is run by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Under CMS, there are 18 organizations called “Networks” that oversee the quality of care for dialysis and transplant facilities across the United States. HSAG: The Florida ESRD Network (Network 7), services the state of Florida. Network 7 works with dialysis facilities to improve the quality of care and to provide educational materials for patients. Patients can contact the Network if they have questions or concerns about the quality of care they receive at their dialysis facility.

WHO ARE ELIGIBLE PEER CANDIDATES?

- Dialysis or transplant patients or their family members or caregivers
- Patients from all backgrounds and modalities
- Individuals with positive outlooks on managing kidney disease
- Individuals who are achieving their treatment goals and can provide insight to help others successfully manage kidney disease
- Patients or family members or caregivers with a good working relationship with their dialysis or transplant facility

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES FOR PEER VOLUNTEERS

BENEFITS OF PROVIDING PEER SUPPORT

- Encourages a shared experience
- Assists with adjustment and alleviating fears related to ESRD treatment
- Improves self-management and survival
- Improves the health and quality of life of the PEER

PEER VOLUNTEER ROLES

Communication Facilitator: Assists patients with talking to staff about concerns or questions

Patient Mentor: Serves as a resource for patient questions and concerns, especially for the new patient

Patient Role Model: By your example, promote active patient involvement in their own care and good self-maintenance behaviors

Network 7 LAN Participant: Contributes to LAN meetings by providing the patient voice and experience

Network Liaison: Helps to distribute information, educational resources, and newsletters from the Network

CONFIDENTIALITY

All healthcare personnel are required to maintain the confidentiality of patient records and personal information. PEER volunteers are expected to follow the same standards of confidentiality:



1. Always get the patient's permission before approaching a staff member with a patient concern.
2. Never repeat personal information you may learn in your role as a PEER volunteer.
3. Always assure the patient that they may contact the Network for assistance, regardless of your intervention or help.

CONFIDENTIAL

MEDICAL ADVICE

As a dialysis patient you have a lot to share with other patients about renal disease. Share your personal experiences cheerfully, but **do not attempt to provide technical medical advice**. Medical treatments or a diet that works for you as a patient may be dangerous or even fatal to another patient with a different combination of medical conditions. You can encourage the other patient to communicate with facility staff to have their questions answered, and perhaps assist with arranging the meeting.

- For medical questions, refer to the doctor.
- For questions about diet, refer to the dietitian.
- For questions about coping, refer to the social worker.



PATIENT CONCERNS

New patients can benefit from knowing that there is someone who understands what it means to be on dialysis, and they might want to approach you with their questions or concerns. If a patient comes to you with a complaint, you should encourage them to utilize the facility's grievance procedure. The social worker serves as a patient advocate and can help with patient concerns.

PATIENT GRIEVANCES

- Know the grievance policies and procedures in your facility and encourage the patient to first try to resolve the complaint at the facility level.
- Become familiar with Network grievance procedures for concerns that cannot be resolved at the facility level.
- Take a positive approach to facility problems; be cheerful and approach staff at the right time. Avoid using a confrontational tone or accusatory words.
- Reassure patients that they have the right to file a grievance and cannot be retaliated against for filing a grievance with the facility or the Network. Federal regulations covering dialysis facilities make this clear.

OTHER REWARDING ACTIVITIES

PEER volunteers can perform other activities in their facilities with the approval of facility management. These activities are not required of a PEER volunteer, however, you may find these activities enjoyable and helpful to others:

- Facilitating meetings between patients and staff
- Maintaining a bulletin board to post information for other patients to view
- Attending Plan of Care meetings as a patient advocate, when requested by a patient
- Working with staff to start a patient support group
- Starting a facility newsletter
- Contributing articles or other items to the Network's patient or provider newsletters
- Planning patient and staff events such as picnics and holiday parties
- Participating in community health fairs
- Working to promote organ donation

CONTACTING THE NETWORK

If you have questions or would like to discuss any concerns or recommendations from your facility, please feel free to call the Network's patient toll-free number 800.826.3773.

Network 7 can also assist with:

- Information about dialysis treatment options
- Vascular access option education
- Grievance resolution
- Increasing your involvement in your dialysis Plan of Care
- Other resources and information you may find helpful in your role as a PEER volunteer



The Florida ESRD Network

HSAG: The Florida ESRD Network

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Network 7 Office Hours:

Monday through Friday

8:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m. ET

patients helping patients.