



YOUR VOICE, YOUR HEALTH: A KIDNEY COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE KIDNEY PATIENT ADVISORY COUNCIL OF THE FORUM OF ESRD NETWORKS

WHAT'S CHANGING - AND WHAT'S NOT - IN THE ESRD PROGRAM: PATIENTS STILL COME FIRST

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Many dialysis patients have heard about recent changes within the ESRD Network Program and may be wondering what those changes mean for them. The good news is that while some organizational changes have taken place behind the scenes, the mission remains the same: improving the quality of care and quality of life for people living with kidney disease.

The End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Network Program is funded by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). ESRD Networks work with dialysis facilities, transplant centers, healthcare providers, patients, and caregivers to improve kidney care through education, quality improvement, patient engagement, and advocacy.

Every five years, CMS awards contracts that establish priorities for the Networks. The new contract cycle, running from 2026 through 2031, continues its commitment to patient-centered care while focusing on several key areas to improve patient outcomes and experiences.

Under the new contract, ESRD Networks will help increase awareness of treatment options such as home dialysis and kidney transplantation so patients can make informed choices that fit their goals and lifestyles. Efforts will also focus on improving care coordination, reducing avoidable

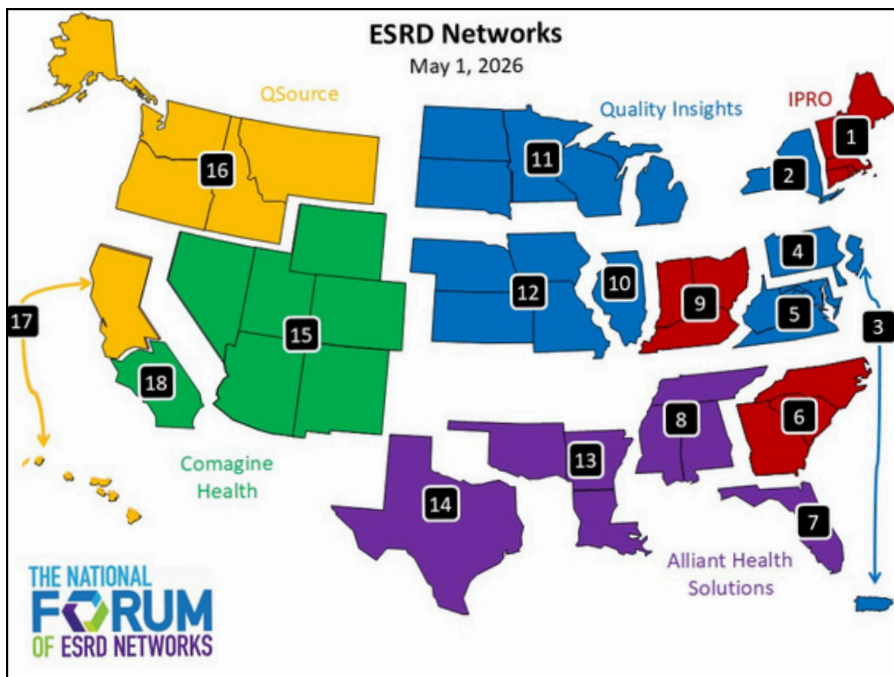
hospitalizations and emergency room visits, and supporting smoother transitions between healthcare settings.

In addition, the Networks will promote whole-person health by supporting mental health screening and follow-up care, increasing nutrition awareness, encouraging preventive health measures, and helping patients stay active in their families, communities, and workplaces whenever possible.

Most importantly, patients and family members will continue to play a vital role in shaping

quality improvement activities. Their voices, experiences, and feedback remain essential to the work of the ESRD Networks. While changes have occurred within the Network Program, the commitment to patients remains strong. The goal of improving the lives of people with kidney disease continues to guide every initiative.

No matter how the contracts change, one thing remains constant: Patients always come first.



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