



Alliance Activities

Alliance Builds Congressional Support for Medicare Administrative Contract (MAC) Accountability and Protecting More Frequent Dialysis

Reps. Lynn Jenkins (R-KS) and Ron Kind (D-WI) introduced H.R. 3635, Local Coverage Determination (LCD) Clarification Act of 2017. The legislation would require MACs to post specific rationale and other information when a draft LCD is proposed. There are currently 50 cosponsors of the bill. The Alliance submitted a letter of support to Rep. Jenkins tailored to the positives on the legislation regarding More Frequent Dialysis, and will be conducting additional advocacy around the legislation. The letter is attached to this monthly update.

Alliance Advocates for Kidney Disease Education through Appropriations Process

The Alliance is working with Senator Shelly Moore-Capito (R-WV) to build support for and increased uptake of Kidney Disease Education (KDE). The Alliance did so through what is called “appropriations report language.” When the Appropriations Committee approves an appropriations bill and sends it to the full Senate or House for a vote, the Committee publishes a report explaining the bill. These reports contain language that provides more detailed guidance to departments and agencies than is provided in the accompanying bill, and it is referred to as “report language.” These committee reports primarily focus on congressional priorities and areas of disagreement with the President. The full report language submitted is:

Kidney Disease Education- The Committee supports the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services in its goal to ensure that home dialysis is economically feasible and available to patients with End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) for whom it is medically, socially, and psychologically suitable. Kidney Disease Education, a benefit available under Medicare, is often instrumental in helping medically appropriate patients choose a home dialysis modality. Research shows that when patients have access to Kidney Disease Education, they are significantly more likely to select home dialysis. In 2015, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that low usage of the Kidney Disease Education benefit could be impeding CMS from encouraging home dialysis uptake. The GAO recommended that the Administrator of CMS should examine the Kidney Disease Education benefit and, if appropriate, seek legislation to revise the categories of providers and patients eligible for the benefit in order to ensure that patients with chronic kidney disease receive objective and timely education related to this condition. The Committee directs the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services to comply with this recommendation, and review current efforts to incentivize utilization of Kidney Disease Education and report to Congress any legislative changes necessary for the Agency to better encourage uptake of this important tool.

Alliance Steering Committee Meeting

The Alliance for Home Dialysis hosted quarterly in-person Steering Committee meeting on March 20th to discuss upcoming regulatory meetings and priorities.

Follow the Alliance on Social Media

In an effort to boost the Alliance's reach to lawmakers, patients, and potential members, we are developing a stronger social media presence and strategy. Please follow the Alliance at the links below:

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

Regulatory Update

Final MAC Jurisdiction Submits LCD

Palmetto is now the MAC for Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee, and has announced their intent to harmonize their policies between Jurisdictions M and J. This LCD is the same LCD as all other MACs which were submitted in the fall of 2017 regarding more frequent dialysis; the Alliance submitted our previously approved comment letter. The comment period will be open from March 26, 2018 and will end comment on May 10, 2018. More information can be found at this [link](#).

New PTAC Proposal

Dialyze Direct has submitted an Alternative Payment Model (APM) proposal to PTAC entitled, *Improved Quality and Cost in Providing Home Hemodialysis to Geriatric Patients Residing in Skilled Nursing Facilities*. The proposal can be viewed at this [link](#). The public comment period closes April 12, 2018. All such written statements should be addressed to the Designated Federal Officer for PTAC and sent by email to PTAC@HHS.gov.

Home Dialysis in the News

Is "Empowered Dialysis" the Key to Better Outcomes? Catalyst NEJM:
<https://catalyst.nejm.org/empowered-self-dialysis-better-outcomes/>

LHS senior, local man hope Tweet ends a four-year search for kidney donor, Lancaster Eagle Gazette:
<https://www.lancastereagle.com/story/news/local/2018/03/25/lancaster-senior-local-man-hope-tweet-ends-four-year-search-kidney-donor/452229002/>