

# COVID-19



## An End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) National Coordinating Center (NCC) Patient Education Webinar Event

February 2, 2021

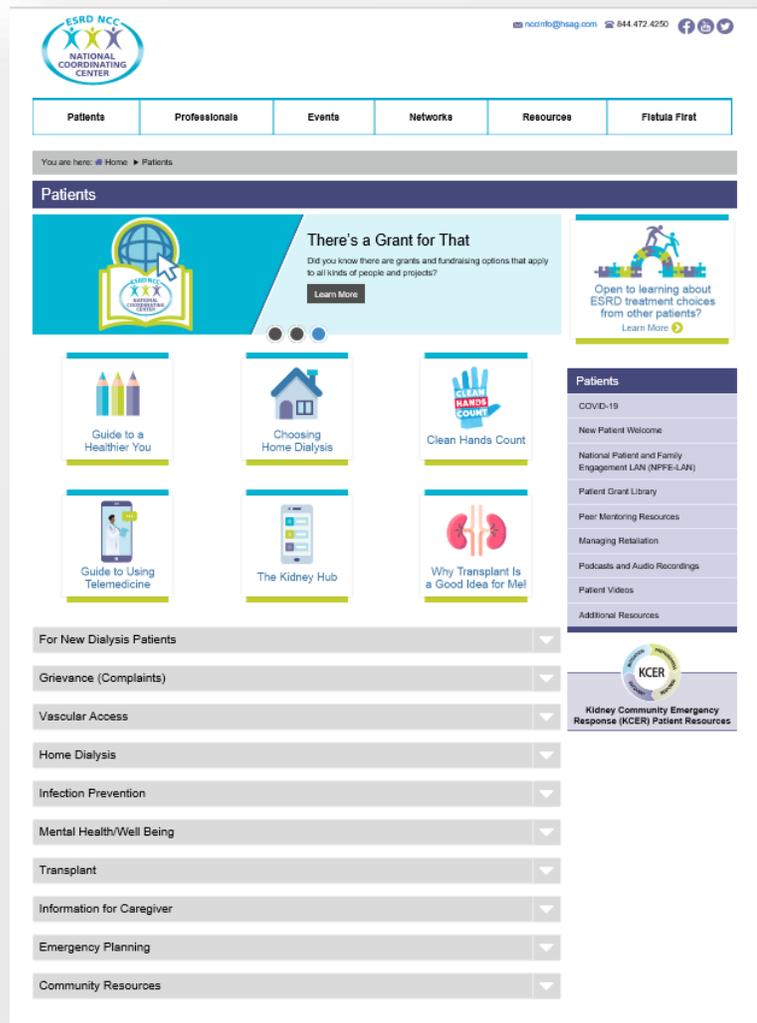
Coronavirus Disease 2019 = COVID-19



# Agenda

- What is this call about?
- Today's speakers
  - Allison Boutwell, MSW, LCSW
    - Patient Services Manager
    - The Florida ESRD Network 7
    - Topic: Understanding the Role of Network Patient Services During COVID-19
  - Derek Forfang
    - Transplant recipient
    - Kidney Patient Advisory Council (KPAC) co-chair
- Questions and answers (Q&As) from chat and Q&A panels

# Online Patient and Family Member Resources



- View resources providing information about:
  - What to expect as a newly diagnosed patient.
  - Understanding the grievance process.
  - Choosing transplantation.
  - Choosing home dialysis.
  - Infection prevention.
  - Emergency planning.
  - Caregiving.
- Get links to trustworthy organizations.
- Visit [www.esrdncc.org/patient](http://www.esrdncc.org/patient).

Source: ESRD NCC

# What Is This Call About?

- Hear from experts who share tips for coping in a COVID-19 environment.
- Provide real-world experiences for others to put into use.
- Engage in bi-weekly calls on varying topics.

# Allison Boutwell, MSW, LSW

Patient Services Manager

The Florida ESRD Network



# Role of ESRD Network 7

The Florida ESRD Network 7 provides nearly 500 dialysis providers and more than 33,000 dialysis patients across its Network service area with:

- quality improvement.
  - data management.
  - grievance investigation.
  - technical assistance.
  - patient and professional education services.
- Our goal is to efficiently and effectively increase the quality of care and quality of life for patients with kidney disease.

# Role of Patient Services Managers

Patient Services Managers (PSMs) are responsible for:

- Resolving patient and/or facility complaints or grievances.
- Conducting educational training on managing difficult patients.
- Mediation.
- Conflict resolution.

Most are licensed clinical social workers with years of direct dialysis and transplant experience.

# COVID-19: Role of the ESRD Network

- Educate facilities on COVID-19 guidance and any changes to it.
- Educate patients and dialysis facility staff on COVID-19 prevention using CDC resources.
- Help dialysis facilities identify the source of COVID case increases and provide resources to decrease them.
- Advocate for patient rights and maintain outpatient access to care.

CDC = The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# Patient and Staff Education

The Network sends weekly emails providing a variety of COVID-19 education, such as:

- [NCC COVID-19 Patient and Provider Webinars](#)
- [Kidney Community Emergency Response \(KCER\) COVID-19 Resource Center](#)
- [CMS COVID-19 Focused Infection Control Survey Tool](#)
- [CMS COVID-19 Provider Toolkit](#)
- [Health Resource & Services Administration \(HRSA\) Telehealth Programs](#)

CMS = The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

# CDC Resources and Guidance

The Network sends weekly emails to all facilities with CDC resources, including:

- [COVIDView Weekly Summary](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccination Toolkits](#)
- [How to Select, Wear, and Clean Your Masks](#)
- [Outpatient Dialysis Facility Preparedness Assessment Tool](#)

## Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Outpatient Dialysis Facility Preparedness Assessment Tool

All U.S. outpatient dialysis facilities should be prepared for the possible arrival of patients with Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). All outpatient dialysis facilities should ensure their staff are trained, equipped, and capable of practices needed to:

- Prevent the spread of respiratory infections, including COVID-19, within the dialysis facility.
- Promptly identify and isolate patients with possible COVID-19 and inform the correct dialysis facility staff and public health authorities.
- Provide dialysis for a limited number of patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 as part of routine operations.
- Potentially provide dialysis for a larger number of COVID-19 patients in the context of an escalating outbreak.
- Monitor and manage any healthcare personnel that might be exposed to COVID-19.
- Communicate effectively within the dialysis facility and plan for appropriate external communication related to COVID-19.

The following checklist is not a list of mandatory requirements; rather, it highlights important areas CDC recommends outpatient dialysis facilities review in preparation for potential arrivals of COVID-19 patients.

Elements to be assessed

1. Infection prevention and control policies and training for healthcare personnel (HCP):			
	Completed	In Progress	Not Started
Facility leadership including, but not limited to, the Chief Medical Officer, quality officers, medical directors, facility administrator, nurse manager, infection prevention personnel, chief operating officer, nephrologists, nurse practitioners has reviewed the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's COVID-19 guidance for dialysis facilities. <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/dialysis.html">www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/dialysis.html</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Facility provides education and job-specific training to HCP regarding COVID-19 including:</b>			
Signs and symptoms of infection.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Importance of hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, cough etiquette and wearing a facemask or cloth face covering for source control.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of personal protective equipment (PPE) including competency evaluation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Triage procedures and patient placement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HCP sick leave policies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-monitoring for fever or respiratory symptoms including not reporting to work when ill.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How and to whom suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases should be reported.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Source: CDC



# ESRD Networks' Technical Assistance Calls

Examples of questions include:

- How are the COVID-19 patients being identified?
- What screening processes is the facility using for all patients?
- How many are nursing home patients?
  - Has the facility been in contact with the nursing home?
  - Is there additional screening for nursing home patients?
- What actions were taken by the facility?
  - Were any infection control audits performed?
- What does the facility think is working best to control the spread?
- What barriers are the facility experiencing?

# Advocate for Patient Rights and Maintain Outpatient Access to Care

Patients can call their ESRD Network with any grievances they may have related to COVID-19. Some examples of grievances are:

- Communication issues—Staff not properly communicating why patients are considered as PUI and what the next steps are.
- Professionalism—Staff treated a patient differently after he/she was diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Screening—Facility was not properly screening patients/staff when entering the facility.
- Sharing of information—Patients were not told if there was a COVID-19 positive patient or staff member with whom they were in close contact with.
- Masks—Patients did not want to wear a mask or wanted to wear their own mask during dialysis.

# Dialysis Facility COVID-19 Best Practices

- Screen all patients and staff for COVID-19 upon entry into the facility, including:
  - Temperature checks
  - Questions regarding symptoms and exposure
- Ensure that all patients are wearing a mask.
  - Many companies require patients to wear a new surgical mask during each treatment.
- Maintain social distancing protocols for patients and visitors in the waiting room.
- Ensure that CDC, local, and state guidelines are followed for infection control:
  - Properly sanitizing surfaces
  - Proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

# COVID-19 Patient Cohorts

Most dialysis organizations have designated facilities or shifts for the following groups of patients to ensure that they continue to receive dialysis treatments:

- PUI-Symptomatic:
  - Patients displaying symptoms of COVID-19 who are awaiting test results
- PUI-Asymptomatic:
  - Patients who have been in close contact with COVID-19 and are awaiting test results
- COVID-19 Positive-Symptomatic
- COVID-19 Positive-Asymptomatic

# Dialysis Facility Role

If patients test positive for COVID-19 or are deemed PUI, dialysis staff should work with patients to explain their options and what to expect when it comes to cohort facilities or shifts. This includes:

- Where is the cohort facility?
- When is their chair time?
- Are there any transportation barriers?
- What criteria must be met before patients can return to their home clinic?
- What happens if patients continue to test positive for a long time, but are no longer considered infectious?
- Will the home clinic keep patients' time slots available for them until they return?

# Case Example 1

A patient contacted the Network because he believed that he was being denied dialysis unfairly. The hospital where he was receiving treatment had explained that he was considered a PUI for COVID-19 due to presenting symptoms of the virus. However, he felt that these symptoms are also very common side effects of dialysis: shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle pain, cough, headache, etc. He was told that he could not return to his home dialysis facility until receiving a negative COVID-19 test.

# Case Example 1 (cont.)

## Patient services actions:

- Opened a grievance with the patient's permission and immediately contacted the dialysis facility. Received the following clarification:
  - Staff confirmed that per facility policy the patient cannot return to their facility until receiving a negative COVID-19 test because they considered the patient a PUI.
  - Facility offered treatments at their PUI cohort facility. However, that facility was 45 minutes from the patient's home.
- Reached out to other dialysis companies to find out where their cohort facilities were located.
- Advocated for a transient treatment at a nearby cohort facility—only 10 minutes from the patient's home.
- Advocated for the patient also to receive a COVID-19 test at the cohort facility.

# Case Example 1 (cont.)

## Barriers:

- The cohort facility for this company was 45 minutes away from the patient's home.
- The transportation company that the patient used for dialysis refused to transport anyone under investigation for COVID-19.
- The patient did not have access to his own transportation, including transportation to have a COVID-19 test.

# Case Example 1 (cont.)

## Outcome

- The patient:
  - Only had to treat on a PUI shift at the cohort facility for 1 treatment.
  - Was able to arrange transportation with a friend.
  - Tested negative for COVID-19 and was able to return to his home facility.

## Case Example 2

- A patient called the Network with concerns about the facility's COVID-19 screening process.
- This patient was exposed to a COVID+ family member—making the patient a PUI.
- This patient's home facility had a PUI shift; however, the patient was concerned about attending because of changes in the screening process:
  - At the beginning of the pandemic, facility staff met patients at the lobby door for screening and to provide masks.
  - Recently the facility was allowing patients to enter the lobby and then screening them before they entered the treatment floor. This led to some patients sitting in the lobby without masks if they did not bring masks from home.

## Case Example 2 (cont.)

### Patient services actions:

- Opened a grievance with the patient's permission and immediately contacted the dialysis facility.
- Reviewed the dialysis facility's policy on screening for COVID-19.
  - Confirmed that the facility was continuing to follow its screening policy, which allowed for screening on the treatment floor. However, the facility was not following its policy regarding masking and social distancing in the lobby.
- Advocated for the facility to implement best practices: both screening and providing masks immediately when patients arrive to the lobby.

# Case Example 2—Continued

## Barriers:

- Staffing: Staffing shortages led to difficulties having a staff member at the front door when patients arrived.
- PPE: The facility tried leaving a box of masks for the patients at the front door. However, those boxes were being stolen, leading to a PPE shortage.

## Case Example 2—Continued

### Outcome:

- The facility implemented best practices, including screening patients at the lobby door and handing out masks.
- The manager agreed to complete audits of the screening process.
- The patient returned to her home facility on the PUI shift and then, after testing negative for COVID-19, went back to her regular treatment shift.

# ESRD NCC Website

Visit the ESRD NCC website for your ESRD Network's information and resources in your state or region:  
[www.esrdncc.org](http://www.esrdncc.org).

The screenshot shows the ESRD NCC website interface. At the top left is the ESRD NCC logo. To the right of the logo are social media icons and contact information: "esrdncc@ncc.org" and "844.472.4250". Below the logo is a navigation menu with tabs for "Patients", "Professionals", "Events", "Networks", "Resources", and "Fidèle First". Below the menu is a breadcrumb trail: "You are here: Home > ESRD Network Map". The main heading is "ESRD Network Map". Below this is a link: "Directory of ESRD Network Organizations (PDF)". The central feature is a map of the United States, color-coded by region. Below the main map are six smaller maps for Alaska, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Hawaii, Guam and Mariana Islands, and American Samoa. At the bottom, there are three columns of links: "Patients" (including COVID-19, Clean Hands Count, New Patient Welcome, National Patient and Family Engagement, LAN (NPFELAN), Patient Care Library, Post-Mortem Resources, Managing Rotations, Podcasts and Audio Recordings, Patient Videos, Additional Resources), "Professionals" (including About the Network, Vascular Access Management, Patient Engagement, Healthcare-Associated Infections, Emergency Preparedness, Patient Education, Quality Incentive Program, Care Transitions, Quality Improvement, Patient First), and "Resources" (including Patients, Professionals, Live for a Lifetime, Emergency Preparedness, Healthcare-Associated Infection (HAI), LAN, Additional Resources, ARI-Specific Resource Libraries, CMS Quality Conferences). A small "ESRD Network Map" icon is also present in the bottom right corner of the page.

Source: ESRD NCC

# Derek Forfang

Transplant recipient

Kidney Patient Advisory Council (KPAC) co-chair



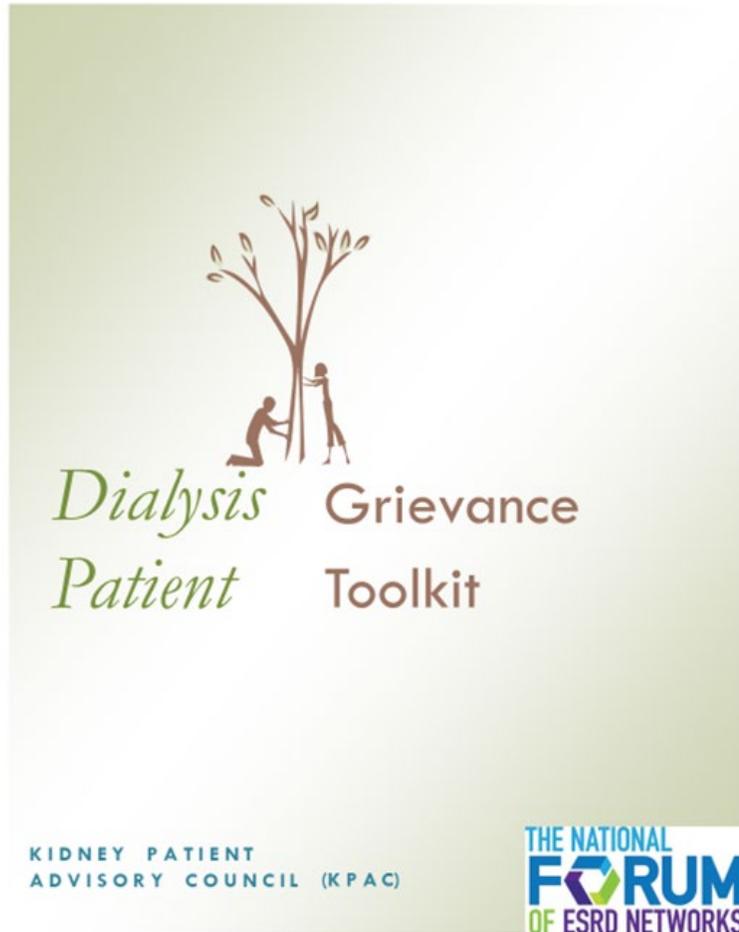
THE NATIONAL  
**FORUM**  
OF ESRD NETWORKS



“You should never second  
guess the power of one voice.”

—Anonymous

# Thank You



Derek Forfang

[derek.Forfang@gmail.com](mailto:derek.Forfang@gmail.com)

Visit [www.esrdnetworks.org](http://www.esrdnetworks.org)

Select Toolkits

THE NATIONAL  
**FORUM**  
OF ESRD NETWORKS

Source: The National Forum of ESRD Networks



# Let Us Hear From You

- Q&As from chat and Q&A panels

# Quality Assessment & Performance Meetings

- A new tool to help you prepare for Quality Assessment & Performance (QAPI) Meetings
- Learn what to expect and how to prepare for:
  - Before the meeting.
  - During the meeting.
  - After the meeting.
- Visit [www.esrdncc.org/patients](http://www.esrdncc.org/patients)
  - Select “For New Dialysis Patients.”
  - QAPI Meeting Resource

## After the Meeting

Follow up with the facility administrator or clinic manager about decisions or plans made during the meeting that will affect what happens on the dialysis floor. Keep sharing your ideas with staff. Tell them if you would like to attend a QAPI meeting again in the future. If you are comfortable, share your experience with other patients.

Discussion Topic <i>During the meeting, write down discussion topics</i>	Follow-up Items <i>Shortly after the meeting</i>	Results <i>By the end of the month of the meeting</i>
<i>Example: Reducing infection rate</i>	<i>Example: I asked staff to provide more information about</i>	<i>Example: Nurse posted Clean Hands poster sink.</i>

## Because Your Voice Matters!



Your dialysis facility often invites patients like you to take part in what is called a Quality Assessment & Performance Improvement (QAPI) meeting. You can also ask to take part in a QAPI meeting. This meeting gives you the chance to talk to the dialysis facility leaders about your concerns and other patient issues. Many times, the ideas and decisions that come out of QAPI meetings affect how the dialysis facility is run.



To have a good QAPI meeting experience, use this document to help you before, during, and after the meeting. Write down notes on what you would like to talk about with the healthcare team. This will help you stay on track during the meeting. Remember, your ideas can help make patient care better.

### Before the QAPI Meeting

To prepare, think about questions, concerns, or feedback you and/or other patients may have. Ask the manager what topics will be discussed at the meeting. This might include:

- Facility improvement
- Home dialysis and kidney transplant education
- Preventing infections
- Emergency preparedness education
- Fistula/Catheter education
- Reducing patient hospitalizations

### During the Meeting

In most cases, you will only be in the meeting for the first 15 minutes. You will be asked to offer suggestions for improving patient engagement and care. The dialysis facility leaders may ask you for your opinion and/or to share your experiences. The questions are meant to help the staff make the dialysis experience better for patients. If you do not understand something, just ask! You may be asked questions like:

- What do you think we are doing well in the dialysis facility?
- What areas do you think we could improve in the dialysis facility?
- What do you think are the most common reasons patients miss or shorten treatments?
- What is the best way for staff to communicate with patients about their treatment?

For more information, visit [www.esrdncc.org/patients](http://www.esrdncc.org/patients).

[www.esrdncc.org/patients](http://www.esrdncc.org/patients).

ESRD NCC contractor under contract with the ESRD and Home Services. The contract is HR-10-7975A-01192021-01.

ESRD NCC Patient and Family Meeting Notes.

# Where to Find Credible Information

## Where to Find Credible Information About the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19)



During this pandemic, it's especially important for everyone to take actions to keep themselves, and others, safe. To do this, let's pause and think through how and where you can find credible, or trustworthy, information—especially as someone with kidney disease.

In stressful times, you may often turn to family and friends for support. Family and friends are great to:

- ✔ Provide or receive emotional support.
- ✔ Connect with by phone call, video chat, or social media.



But your family and friends might not know the most up-to-date information on COVID-19 or the best actions to take right now, especially if you are on dialysis or have a kidney transplant. For this kind of information, you should turn to experts for credible information.

So, where can you find credible COVID-19 information? Start with these sites.

For general updates (e.g., handwashing and disinfection, stay-at-home orders, use of face masks) on COVID-19:

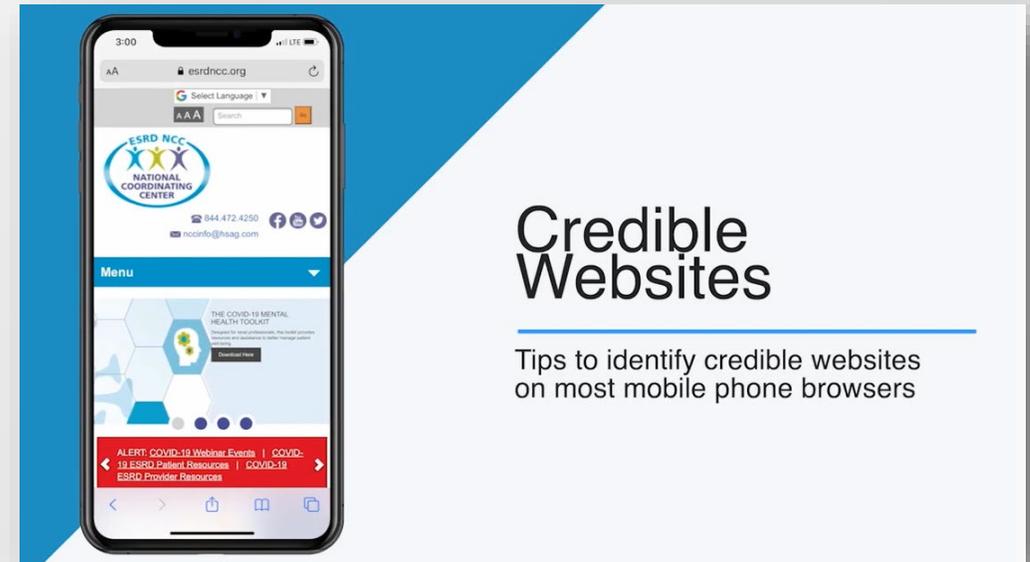
- [The U.S. Coronavirus Emergency Response](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
- [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services \(CMS\)](#)
- [U.S. Department of Health & Human Services \(HHS\)](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)



Most of these credible organizations also have social media accounts, like Twitter or Facebook. On Twitter check out: @CDC, @CMS, @HHS, @WHO, @ESRDNCC, @KCCERprogram, @KidneyPatients, @NKF, and @RSNHope. Most ESRD Networks have social media accounts too!

For chronic kidney disease-related updates on COVID-19:

- On the [ESRD National Coordinating Center \(NCC\)](#) website, you can learn about kidney-related COVID-19 health information and where to locate webinars from health experts and patient advocates.
- Go to the [Kidney Community Emergency Response \(KCCER\)](#) website for the most up-to-date resources on COVID-19 from government, patient, and professional organizations.
- View the [ESRD Networks](#) for a directory of ESRD Network Organizations nationwide to find kidney disease or dialysis help in your area.
- Check out the [American Association of Kidney Patients: Kidney Disease and COVID-19](#) to see webinars, frequently asked questions, and health alerts about kidney disease and COVID-19.
- Look to [Dialysis Patient Citizens: COVID-19 Resources for Dialysis Patients](#) to read about how dialysis centers are working to keep patients safe and prevent COVID-19 from spreading.
- The [National Kidney Foundation COVID-19](#) contains information to help kidney patients manage their health during COVID-19 like ideas for kidney-friendly dieting and coping strategies.
- Turn to the [Renal Support Network COVID-19](#) for tips on how kidney patients can stay physically and emotionally healthy.



## Credible Websites

Tips to identify credible websites on most mobile phone browsers

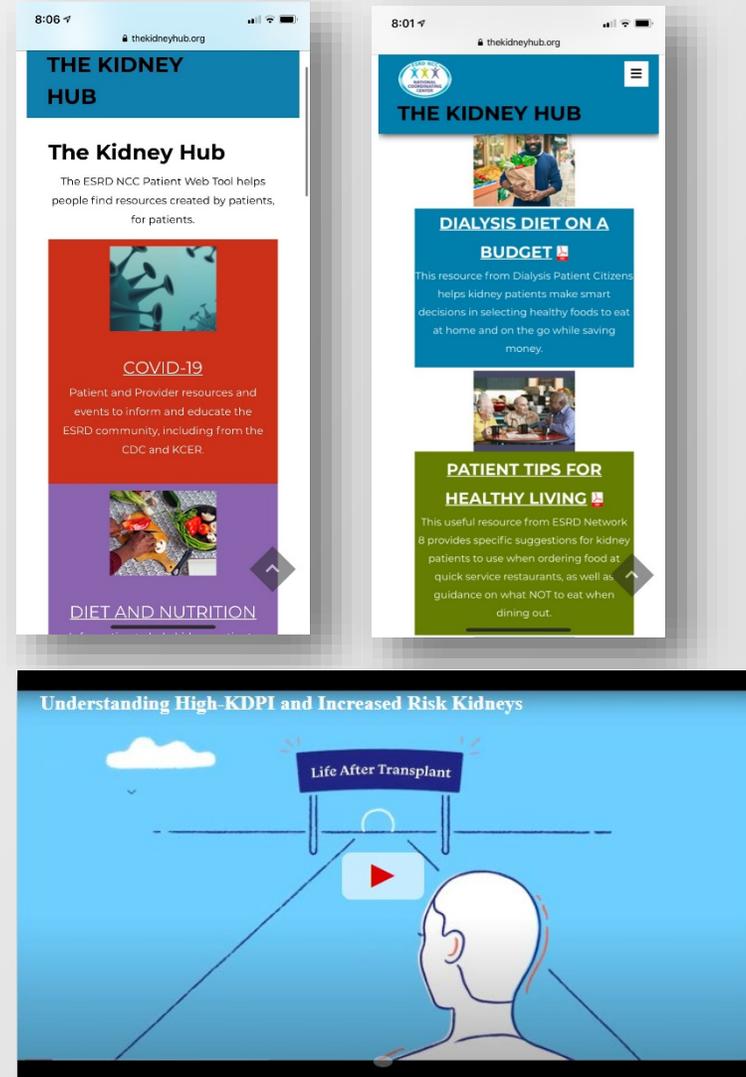
Visit [www.KidneyCOVIDinfocenter.com](http://www.KidneyCOVIDinfocenter.com).  
Click on “For Patients.”

Source: ESRD NCC



# The Kidney Hub

- The Kidney Hub – Mobile-friendly web tool created with patients, for patients
- Links to new videos and helpful resources added
  - Newly added diet and nutrition section
- Let us know what you think.
  - Email us at [NCCinfo@hsag.com](mailto:NCCinfo@hsag.com).
- Visit [www.TheKidneyHub.org](http://www.TheKidneyHub.org) today!

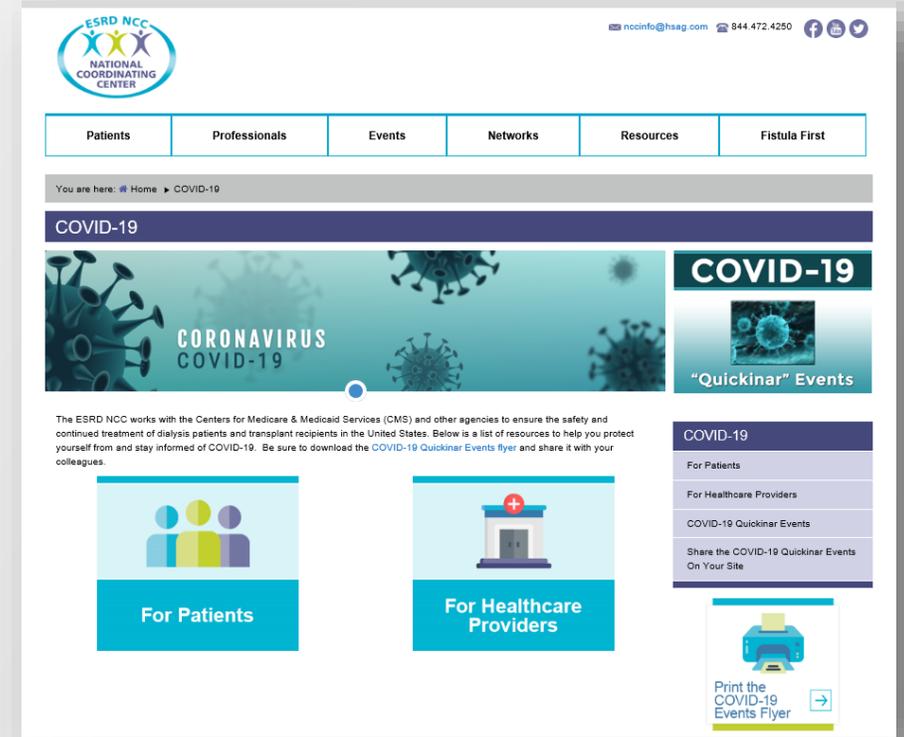


Source: ESRD NCC

# Our Next COVID-19 Webinar Events

- Save the dates for our next events.
  - Provider-focused events: February 10 at 3 p.m. ET
  - Patient-focused event: February 16 at 4 p.m. ET

Visit [www.kidneyCOVIDinfocenter.com](http://www.kidneyCOVIDinfocenter.com) for information and to register.



Source: ESRD NCC

# Thank You!

[NCCinfo@hsag.com](mailto:NCCinfo@hsag.com)

844.472.4250

813.865.3545

[www.esrdncc.org](http://www.esrdncc.org)

Additional COVID-19 resources for patients and providers:



<https://www.kcercoalition.com/en/covid-19/>



[www.thekidneyhub.org/covid19/](http://www.thekidneyhub.org/covid19/)



[www.kidneyCOVIDinfocenter.com](http://www.kidneyCOVIDinfocenter.com)

This material was prepared the End Stage Renal Disease National Coordinating Center (ESRD NCC) contractor, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy nor imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. Publication Number FL-ESRD NCC-7N5TCO-01292021-01

