



Forum Matters

Highlights & Updates

Third Quarter 2023

<https://esrdnetworks.org/resources-news/forum-matters/>

In Memory...

Derek Forfang, Forum Board of Directors member and Kidney Patient Advisory Council (KPAC) Co-Chair, passed away on October 20, 2023. Derek leaves behind a deep legacy of patient advocacy. He worked hard over the years to improve the quality of life of kidney patients, with particular attention given to depression and supporting patients in asking for help with their mental health.

Derek was a vital member of the Forum of ESRD Networks for over 10 years,. He always said that the Forum and the KPAC were his home. He greatly enjoyed leading and interacting with his colleagues on the KPAC and relished organizing their holiday celebration each year. Derek left his mark on many; in addition to the Forum, he worked with the National Kidney Foundation, the American Society of Nephrology, the Making Dialysis Safer Coalition, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and a host of other organizations. He was a published author and frequent speaker. Derek will be greatly missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing him. Rest in peace, dear friend.

The Forum has established the **Derek Forfang Memorial Fund** to honor Derek's legacy. The Fund will support the work of the Forum's KPAC. [Make your tax-deductible donation today.](#) Click on the box next to "Dedicate my donation to the Derek Forfang Memorial Fund," and be sure to leave a message or memory you have of Derek with us in the Message box.



What is the Forum?



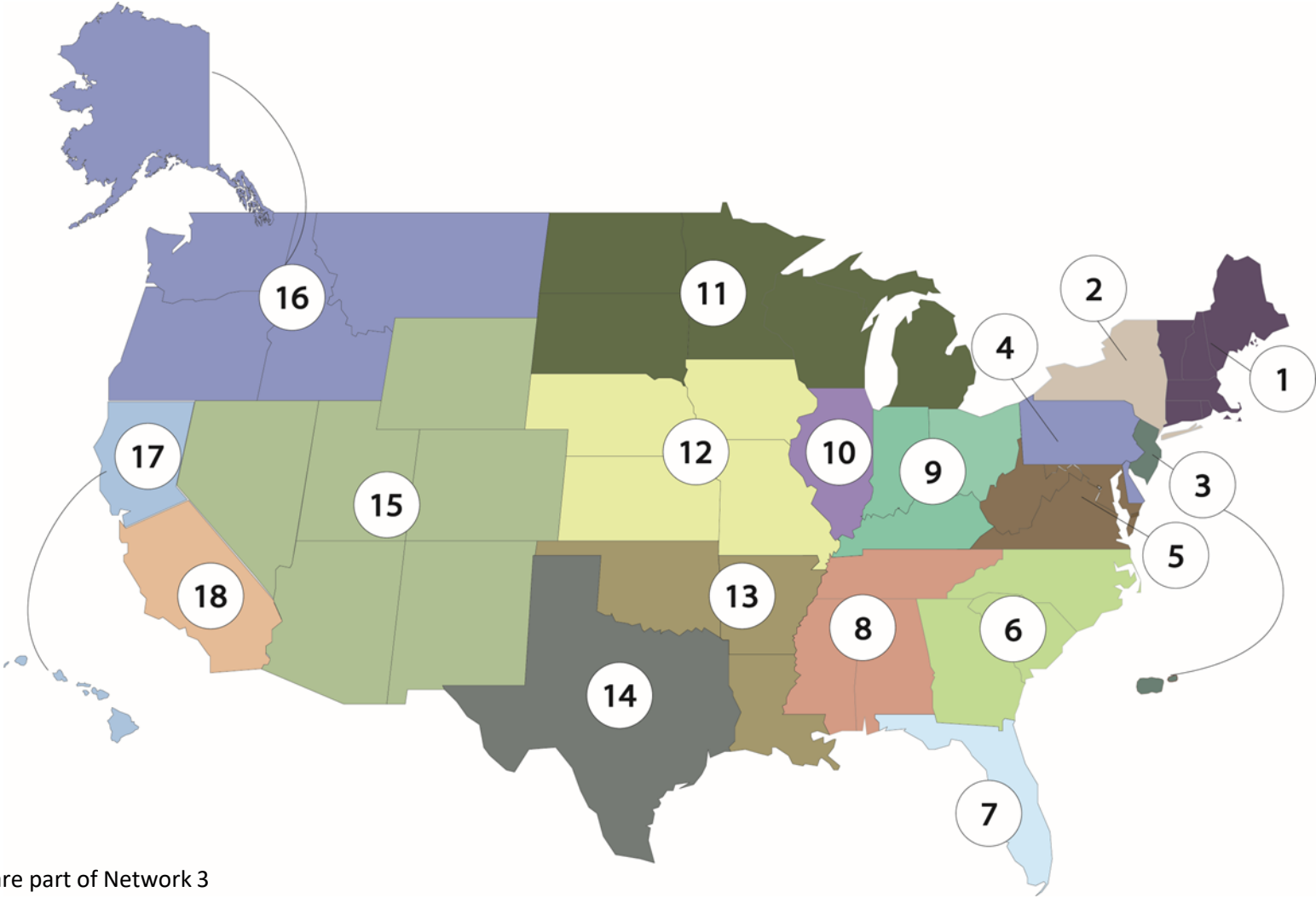
All ESRD Networks are members of the Forum of ESRD Networks, which is a not-for-profit organization that advocates on behalf of its membership and coordinates projects and activities of mutual interest to ESRD Networks. The Forum facilitates the flow of information and advances a national quality agenda with CMS and other renal organizations.

The **MISSION** of the Forum is to support and advocate on behalf of the ESRD Networks in promoting methods to improve the quality of care to patients with renal disease.

CORE VALUES:

- Volunteerism
- Collaboration
- Innovation and Flexibility
- Spread of Knowledge
- Integrity
- Autonomy of Individual ESRD Networks
- Person (Patient & Family) Centeredness

ESRD Networks



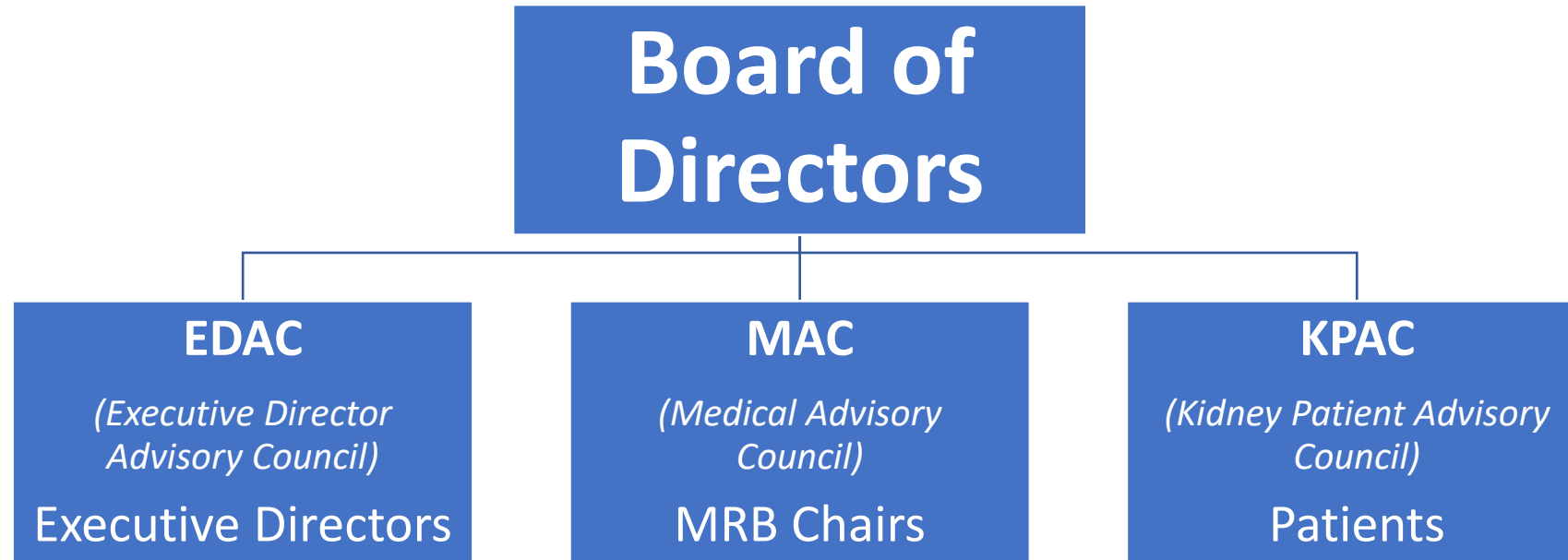
Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands are part of Network 3
Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa are part of Network 17

Strategic Planning Priorities and Updates



- Strategic Partnerships
 - Continued collaboration with CMS, NKF, RPA, and other stakeholders
 - Continued development of new toolkits and updates to existing toolkits
- Board Development
 - Began development of member questionnaire to gauge areas of interest/expertise
- Customer Outreach, Sharing, & Engagement
 - Implemented social media plan for 2023
 - Grew social media audience
 - Posted *Forum Matters* to the Forum website
- Resource Identification
 - Continued work on fundraising plan to diversify revenue sources

Organizational Chart



- Assisting the Networks
- Council Activities: MAC, EDAC KPAC
- Regular Communication with CMS
- Facilitate flow of information between the Forum and Network Staff/BOD/MRB/PAC
- Relationships with other Stakeholders (i.e., RHA, RPA, LDOs, NKF, AAKP, CDC, ASN)

Forum Presidents



Elbert P. Tuttle, Jr.

(1976-1978)

Robert J. Soberman

(1978-1980)

Frederick Westervelt

(1980-1982)

Dominick E. Gentile, MD

(1982-1984)

William W. Pfaff, MD

(1984-1986)

Sidney Baskin

(1986-1989)

John L. Bengfort, MD

(1989-1992)

John D. Bower, MD

(1992-1994)

Louis H. Diamond, MB, ChB, FACP

(1994-1998)

Jay B. Wish, MD

(1998-2001)

Alan S. Kliger, MD

(2001-2004)

Derrick L. Latos, MD, MACP

(2004-2006)

Richard S. Goldman, MD

(2006-2009)

Cynthia Kristensen, MD

(2009-2011)

Klemens Meyer, MD

(2011-2012)

Andrew D. Howard, MD, FACP

(2012-2015)

John Wagner, MD, MBA

(2015-2017)

Donald Molony, MD

(2017-2019)

Ralph Atkinson III, MD

(2019-2021)

David Henner, DO

(2021 - 2023)

Kam Kalantar-Zadeh, MD, MPH, PhD

(2023-Present)

Forum Board of Directors (October 2023)



Executive Committee:

President: Kam Kalantar-Zadeh, MD, MPH, PhD

President-Elect: Dan Landry, DO, FASN

Past President: David Henner, DO

Treasurer: Stephanie Hutchinson, MBA

Secretary: Chris Brown

MAC Chair: Dan Landry, DO, FASN

MAC Vice-Chair: Preethi Yerram, MD, MS, FASN

EDAC Chair: Vicky Cash, MBA, BSN, RN

EDAC Vice-Chair: Mary Albin, BS, CPHQ

KPAC Co-Chair: Dawn Edwards

Members-at-Large:

Christine Logar, MD, FASN

Kelly M. Mayo, MS

Keith Norris, MD PhD

Stephen Pastan, MD

Maria Regnier, MSN, RN, CNN

Dee LeDuc

Debra Hain, PhD, APRN, AGPCNP-BC, FAAN, FAANP, FNKF

Ad Hoc:

Andrew Howard, MD, FACP

Donald Molony, MD

John Wagner, MD, MBA

Emeritus:

Louis Diamond, MB, ChB, FACP, FCP (SA)

Executive Directors Advisory Council (July 2023)



Chair:	Vicky Cash, MBA, BSN, RN
Vice-Chair:	Mary Albin, BS, CPHQ
Networks 1/2	Sue Caponi, MBA, RN, BSN, CPHQ
Networks 3/4	Chris Brown
Network 5	Brandy Vinson
Network 6	Danielle Daley, MBA
Networks 7/13/15/17/18	Helen Rose, MSW, BSW, LCSW
Networks 8/14	Mary Albin, BS, CPHQ
Network 9	Vicky Cash, MBA, BSN, RN
Network 10	Audrey Broaddus
Network 11	Dee LeDuc
Network 12	Stephanie Smith
Network 16	Stephanie Hutchinson, MBA

Medical Advisory Council (October 2023)



Chair: Daniel L. Landry, DO, FASN

Vice Chair: Preethi Yerram, MD, MS, FASN

Immediate Past Chair: Kam Kalantar-Zadeh, MD, MPA, PhD

Network 1: Daniel L. Landry, DO, FASN

Network 2: George Coritsidis, MD

Network 3: Keith Norris, MD, PhD

Network 4: Paul Palevsky, MD

Network 5: Marc Brazie, MD

Network 6: John J. Doran, MD, FASN

Network 7: Debra Hain, PhD, APRN, AGPCNP-BC, FAAN, FAANP, FNKF

Network 8: Martha Tankersley, MSN, RN

Network 9: Anne Huml, MD, MS

Network 10: Daniel Roseman, MD

Network 11: Louis Raymond, MD

Network 12: Preethi Yerram, MD, MS, FASN

Network 13: Laura Rankin, MD

Network 14: Donald Molony, MD

Network 15: Harmeet Singh, MD

Network 16: Christine Logar, MD

Network 17: Ramin Sam, MD

Network 18: Kam Kalantar-Zadeh, MD, MPH, PhD

Ad Hoc Member: Stephen Pastan, MD

EDAC Rep: Sue Caponi, MBA, RN, BSN, CPHQ (1/2)

QID Rep: Barbara Dommert-Breckler, RN, BSN, CNN (16)

KPAC Rep: VACANT

Kidney Patient Advisory Council (October 2023)



- | | | | |
|-------------|---|-------------|--|
| Network 1: | Jerry Calabritto
Sherrie Shively | Network 12: | Shane Blanchard |
| Network 2: | Stephanie Dixon
Dawn Edwards (Co-Chair) | Network 13: | Bobby Walker |
| Network 3: | Bill Senior
Anthony Abbate | Network 14: | Precious McCowan
Abby Ruiz |
| Network 4: | Timmy Nelson | Network 15: | VACANT |
| Network 5: | Virna Elly
Patrick Gee | Network 16: | Bob Crabtree
Lisa Custer |
| Network 6: | Dolores McGrath | Network 17: | Doris Lew |
| Network 7: | Janice Starling | Network 18: | VACANT |
| Network 8: | Marquita Kirk | EDAC Rep: | Dee LeDuc (NW 11) |
| Network 9: | Evan Coaker | PSD Reps: | Yessi Cubillo (NW 3)
Lisa Hall, MSSW, LICSW (NW 16) |
| Network 10: | VACANT | | |
| Network 11: | Jeff Nelson
Mary Baliker | | |

Forum Leadership Calls & Meetings

Forum Executive Committee:

- Monthly conference calls

Forum Board of Directors:

- Quarterly conference calls
- 2023 Meetings: March 7 & 10 (virtual); September 22-23, 2023 (Denver, CO)

CMS/Forum Leadership Calls

- Monthly conference calls
- In-person meetings at CMS Quality Conference *(2020, no in-person meeting in 2021, 2022, or 2023)*

CMS/Network/Forum COVID-19 Calls

- Weekly calls began April 2020, transitioned to monthly in November 2020, ended May 2021, monthly calls resumed August 2021, bi-monthly calls began February 2022

Medical Advisory Council (MAC)

- Quarterly conference calls
- Annual MAC Meeting: November 1, 2023 (Philadelphia, PA)

Executive Director Advisory Council (EDAC)

- Monthly conference calls
- Meeting with CMS & Division of Kidney Health/iQIIG Leaders
- Periodic calls with FMC, DaVita, RHA

Kidney Patient Advisory Council (KPAC)

- Monthly conference calls

Highlights from September 2023 Meeting

- Open Session
 - President's Hot Topics including 50 years of ESRD, the California Dialysis Council annual conference and dialysis patient and facility trends (including facility closures) – Kam Kalantar-Zadeh, MD, MPH, PhD
 - Implicit Bias and Impact on Kidney Care – Keith Norris, MD
 - KPAC Report and Dawn's Hot Topics, including obesity and dialysis, adequacy measures, vascular access, and dialysis staffing shortages – Dawn Edwards
 - IVDs, Practicing Health Equity, and Forum Toolkits – Dan Landry, DO, FASN, and Dawn Edwards
- BOD
 - Dr. Kalantar presented the President's Report, including review of CMS/Forum communications, the Second Chance Program, comments submitted to CMS and PQM on measures, and the Forum's SHEP initiative.
- KPAC
 - Ms. Edwards recognized Nieltje Gedney, a patient and home dialysis advocate, who recently passed away.
 - Members will serve on the advisory board for an NIH-funded project on geriatrics in dialysis.
 - She reviewed KPAC activities and strategic planning initiatives.
- EDAC
 - OY2 began May 1, 2023, with a greater focus on health equity and vulnerable populations. Networks are also required to conduct site visits based and are hiring additional staff to undertake this task.
 - New contract measures include a BMI measure, data quality, and pneumonia vaccination to align with the CDC guidelines.
 - Ms. Cash reviewed the Network goals and performance.

Highlights from September 2023 Meeting

- MAC
 - Dr. Landry reviewed the newly updated Home Dialysis Toolkit as well as the forthcoming Health Equity Toolkit, both including a first-of-its-kind patient perspective.
 - He reviewed the Forum's response to the CMS Proposed Rule.
 - **FIVE** Sharing Highly Effective Practices (SHEP) initiatives have been posted to the Forum website at <https://esrdnetworks.org/education/sharing-highly-effective-practices-in-the-kidney-community/approved-highly-effective-practices/>.
- EQRS
 - Mr. Brown gave an overview of EQRS and the new transplant dashboard.
 - Electronic 2728 and 2746 forms are anticipated for release soon.
- NCC & KCER
 - Ms. Mayo offered a brief update on the NCC and KCER work.
 - The NCC is working to enhance the health equity dashboard and reports.
 - KCER has been charged to work with all state emergency management agencies.

Highlights from September 2023 Meeting

- Online Hemodiafiltration – George Aronoff, MD
 - Dr. Aronoff provided a deeper understanding of HDF technology as compared to standard HD.
 - He shared a 2023 meta-analysis study comparing HDF to HD, as well as the 2023 CONVINCENCE study which showed improvement in mortality over time with HDF.
 - He discussed the potential for improved quality of life for patients in HDF.
- ESRD PPS QIP Proposed Rule and Update to the ETC – Andy Howard, MD
 - Dr. Howard shared information on the 2024 Proposed Rule and the Forum’s comments, including but not limited to:
 - Transitional payment for new and innovative technology, including the Buzzy Pro to control pain during needle insertion for HD,
 - Changes to the low volume payment adjustment,
 - Comments re: “time on machine” so that facilities are not penalized by providing more time on the machine or extra supplies to patients,
 - The new health equity measures to which facilities must attest, and
 - Concerns that CMS will keep the COVID vaccination measure at 90% for patients and staff now that the CDC’s definition of “up-to-date” has changed.
 - Dr. Howard shared the goals of the ETC which include:
 - Greater use of home dialysis and transplantation
 - Reduction in Medicare spending
 - Preserving/enhancing quality of care
 - Addressing health equity
 - He also discussed payment adjustments as well as achievement benchmarks.

Professional Toolkits

- Inpatient Medical Director Toolkit
- Kidney Transplant Toolkit
- Transitions of Care Toolkit
- Vaccination Toolkit
- Outpatient Medical Director Toolkit
- Home Dialysis Toolkit (update released August 2023)
- Catheter Reduction Toolkit
- QAPI Toolkit
- Health Equity Toolkit (in progress)

Patient Toolkits

- Health Equity Toolkit (in progress)
- Dialysis Patient Depression Toolkit
- Dialysis Patient Grievance Toolkit
- Financial Help Resources
- Kidney Patient Transplant Toolkit
 - *Patient video providing an overview of the toolkit available at https://media.esrdnetworks.org/documents/Is_A_Kidney_Transplant_Right_For_Me.mp4; consider sharing with your patients!*

Toolkit	What's New
Home Dialysis Toolkit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New sections to address AAKH and Conditions for Coverage updates • Emergency management of home dialysis patients • Impact of ESCOs, ETC model, voluntary models on home therapies • Emerging technology and impact and benefits to home therapies • Addressing disparities and access to care • Home therapy options in the LTC/nursing home settings • KPAC section: empowering patients and care partners to be successful at home
Health Equity Toolkit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms of healthcare inequity • Challenges faced by immigrants with ESKF in the US • Promoting patient engagement and health literacy • Causes and consequences of involuntary discharge • Creating a safe environment for patient-provider collaboration • Implementing and practicing health equity • Making the best use of resources and SHEP

Regularly scheduled calls to discuss programmatic/strategic issues:

- **Anita Monteiro**, Director, iQuality Improvement & Innovation Group (iQIIG)
- **Shane Illies**, Deputy Director, iQIIG
- **Vacant**, CMS Chief Medical Officer for Quality Improvement
- **Shalon Quinn**, Special Advisor – Data Initiatives
- **Melissa Dorsey**, Director, Division of Kidney Health, iQIIG
- **Ann Turner**, Acting Deputy Director, Division of Kidney Health, iQIIG
- **Mitzi Christ**, Regional Program Manager, Division of Kidney Health, iQIIG
- CORs, ARAs, Central Office staff

2023 Calls: 2/13, 4/17, 6/12, 7/10, 8/14, 9/11

CMS Organizational Chart

Chiquita Brooks-LaSure,
Administrator, CMS

Liz Fowler
Director, Center for
Medicare and Medicaid
Innovation

iQuality Improvement & Innovation Group

Anita Monteiro, Director
Shane Illies, Deputy Director
Shalon Quinn, PhD, Special Advisory-Data Initiatives
Vacant, CMS Chief Medical Officer for Quality
Improvement



DHHS/CMS Organizational Chart:

https://www.cms.gov/about-cms/agency-information/cmsleadership/downloads/cms_organizational_chart.pdf

Highlights from the 3rd Quarter 2023

- Ann Turner has been named Acting Deputy Director of DKH; Melissa Dorsey will remain Director of DKH for at least one year.
- The Forum and CMS continued to discuss the Network obesity measure throughout the 3rd quarter.
- Involuntary discharge and the Second Chance Program were discussed; of the 18 ESRD Networks, 8 have Second Chance Programs, 3 have similar programs, and 7 have no programs.
- The Forum shared information on its numerous toolkits, including the newly updated home dialysis toolkit and upcoming health equity toolkit.
- Discussion continued on staffing shortages. Of note, for the first time in its 50-year history, more dialysis facilities are closing vs. opening.
- The Forum has requested to have further discussions about the QIP measures and the Performance Score Certificates.
- Dr. Howard continued to share transplant metrics, including new data on high KDPI kidneys showing benefits for pre-emptive transplants.
- Mr. Brown continued to share COVID updates, noting data lags making it difficult to track the current vaccination status of patients.
- CMS/Forum leadership calls moved from every other month to monthly to allow for more frequent interaction.

What Else Has the Forum Been Doing?

- The Forum hosted its first-ever Open Session at its September Board meeting. Over 65 individuals attended virtually or in-person, including Network staff, MAC and KPAC members, and CMS colleagues.
- In August, the Forum submitted comments to CMS on the 2024 Proposed Rule. Comments can be read in full at https://media.esrdnetworks.org/documents/Attachment1_ForumofESRDNetworksCMS1782PCommentsAugust2023.pdf
- Two new Sharing Highly Effective Practices (SHEP) initiatives have been approved and posted to the Forum website at <https://esrdnetworks.org/education/sharing-highly-effective-practices-in-the-kidney-community/approved-highly-effective-practices/>. More highly effective practices are forthcoming.

Forum Members in the Community

- L. Custer. Video: Home Dialysis: Possible Barriers to Overcome available at <https://youtu.be/8cUMZDJhAXM?si=wFixPxxCrFQh1 ug>. (July 2023)
- D. Edwards, S. Dixon. Making Dialysis Safer Coalition. Virtual. (July 2023)
- T. Nelson. Radio Interview: Transplanting Hope. (July 2023)
- L. Hall. Depression: Barriers to Treatment and Some Solutions. Pacific Northwest Council of Nephrology Social Workers Workshop. (July 2023)
- P. Gee. Graduation Speaker and Graduate: Patients Professor Academy. University of Maryland School of Pharmacy. (August 2023)
- D. Henner. Transitional Dialysis Care. Visonex Annual User Group. (August 2023)
- P. Gee. Gut PD Workshop: Patients' and Caregivers' Perspectives on Gut Health Outcomes in Peritoneal Dialysis. University of Sydney/University of Queensland, Australia. (August 2023)
- L. Hall. Who You Gonna Call? Getting Your Dialysis and Transplant Care Concerns Addressed. National Kidney Foundation Virtual Education Series. (August 2023)
- D. Edwards, M. Baliker, P. McCowan. Kidney Health Initiative Innovations. Washington, DC. (September 2023)
- D. Edwards. Appointed to the Editorial Board (Patient Voices) of the *Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*. (September 2023)

On the Horizon in 2023



- Advancing American Kidney Health
- Focus on enhancing social media presence
- Updates to MAC Toolkits and development of three new MAC Toolkits
- New KPAC Toolkits
- Actively pursuing additional financial resources to support Forum/Network activities
- Sharing Highly Effective Practices in the Kidney Community: consider submitting a best practice to the Forum's new community education resource

<https://esrdnetworks.org/education/sharing-best-practices-in-the-kidney-community>

The Forum is committed to supporting the activities of the ESRD Networks and improving care for all kidney patients.

We have a variety of free educational materials on our website and more under development.

We are a nonprofit organization and do all this through volunteer members and limited financial resources.

Your donation directly supports this work.

All donations are tax deductible.

[Donate Here](https://esrdnetworks.org/donate)

<https://esrdnetworks.org/donate>

Donate Online!



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THE NATIONAL FORUM OF ESRD NETWORKS

Advocating for the organizations that monitor the quality of chronic kidney disease, dialysis and kidney transplant care in the USA.

ESRD Networks - contact information

Welcome to the Forum of ESRD Networks website

Donate

The National Forum of ESRD Networks, Inc. is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization #13-3246354. Your donation is tax deductible to the extent allowable by law. No goods or services will be provided by the Forum in return or consideration for this contribution. Donations can also be mailed to the Forum Office at PO Box 203, Birchwood, WI 54817.

Donate now

What's new on the Forum website?

Learn about the new Transplant Toolkit for Patients

This 12-minute video provides an

Social Media



Followers:
Feb 2020 = 134
Aug 2022 = 303
September 2023 = 352



Followers:
Feb 2020 = 95
Aug 2022 = 331
September 2023 = 428



Followers:
March 2023 = 47
September 2023 = 101



Followers:
May 2021 = 6
Aug 2022 = 11
September 2023 = 13



Social Media



esrdnetworks.org



<https://facebook.com/esrdnetworks>



<https://twitter.com/ESRDNetworks> (tag us @esrdnetworks)



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-forum-of-esrd-networks-inc>



<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9Vp4Hfu7VmSTbSwG7-6e2g>

Sharing something about the KPAC? Use #KPACPatientVoice

Questions / Comments:
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