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# MEDICARE COMPARE:

(Formerly Dialysis Facility Compare)

## What Dialysis Professionals Should Know

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### *What is Medicare Compare?*

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently combined their 9 original compare sites giving you one place to locate information needed about dialysis facilities and other providers, like nursing homes and hospitals. The new features include updated maps, new filters, and a consistent design that makes it easier to compare providers. For the renal community, Medicare Compare is a helpful tool located at [www.medicare.gov/care-compare](http://www.medicare.gov/care-compare). The tool allows kidney patients, their family or friends, and dialysis professionals to locate information about more than 7,000 Medicare-approved dialysis facilities across the nation. The website provides information on how well dialysis facilities care for their patients, how often dialysis facilities follow best practices, how effective they are at keeping patients healthy, and how patients feel about their experience at dialysis facilities.

CMS regularly updates the website with new information and works closely with the kidney disease community to make sure the quality measures reported on the website reflect best practices for care of End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) patients on dialysis. You will find the same measures and quality information on the Medicare Compare website that was on the original Dialysis Facility Compare tool.

### *Why renal professionals should know about Medicare Compare?*

The goal of the Medicare Compare website is to give all members of the kidney disease community access to up-to-date information about dialysis care. The information can be used by patients, researchers, and healthcare providers. As a renal professional, it shows you where you can improve quality of care at your facility. Knowing about this website can help with empowering your patients to use the tool to make decisions about the best facility for them. It is particularly useful for patients who are new or planning to travel and want to learn about the care the dialysis facility provides.

### *The Medicare Compare website provides the following information:*

- Address and phone
- Shifts starting after 5:00 p.m.
- Types of dialysis offered (in-center or home dialysis)
- Facility ownership (profit or nonprofit)
- Number of hemodialysis chairs
- Star ratings for quality of patient care and patient experience of care. (These ratings show how well a dialysis center provides care compared to the national average. One star is the lowest and 5 stars in the highest rating.)

After reviewing the website, if any of your facility's information is incorrect, or has changed, contact your End Stage Renal Disease Network to update it. If you are a Medicare-certified dialysis facility but not listed on the website, please contact your State Survey Agency.

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### *The Data and Measures*

The dialysis information on the Medicare Compare website comes from four key sources: Medicare claims data, CROWN Data (this includes REMIS data from Medicare and CROWNWeb data), NHSN, and the In-Center Hemodialysis Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (ICH CAHPS) survey administered to in-center hemodialysis patients.

The Quality of patient care measures are based on a set of criteria and summarize how well a dialysis facility:

- Avoids unnecessary transfusions
- Prevents bloodstream infections
- Remove waste from the blood (dialysis adequacy) and nutritional status
- Uses the most effective vascular access
- Keeps a patient's minerals in balance
- Avoids hospitalizations and death
- Increases the number of patients on a transplant waitlist

### *Helpful Tips*

- Spend time navigating the new website and tabs so you are comfortable talking to your patients about how to use the website.
- Routinely educate your patients about the website and the benefits.
- Share with your interdisciplinary team how your facility compares to other facilities and identify areas for improvement.
- If your facility has an iPad for patient education, demonstrate the features to your patients to increase their comfort with using the website.
- Encourage patients who have questions about the quality of care at a specific facility to use the Medicare Compare website to learn how the facility compares to others.



#### Consider this when choosing a dialysis facility

[What to ask about dialysis centers and providers](#)

[How Medicare covers dialysis care](#)

[Have a complaint about your dialysis care or a facility?](#)