

# Kidney *Chronicles*

END-STAGE RENAL DISEASE NETWORK OF NEW ENGLAND

JANUARY 2015

HELPFUL TIPS TO  
EMPOWER ESRD  
PATIENTS AS  
CONSUMERS



Improving Healthcare  
for the Common Good®

## New Year: New You!

**T**he beginning of the New Year is the perfect time to become better informed and more active in your healthcare!

Ask a member of your healthcare team to schedule a care plan meeting. Because your doctors and dialysis facility staff participate with you in the meeting, it provides a great way for you to obtain information, ask questions, and become a more active partner in your treatment. A care plan meeting is your own personal road map to better health and improved quality of life. It is also the perfect opportunity for you and the members of your healthcare team to set your medical, nutritional and social goals.

It's also important to know that you don't have to attend a care plan meeting alone! Patients are encouraged to bring either a family member or care partner to this meeting. Having another person with you helps to ensure that you ask all the right questions and leave the meeting with all the information you need.

Now that you've asked your healthcare team to meet, here are some tips to help you prepare for your care plan meeting:

- Get to know yourself: Once you've set a date for your care plan meeting, take the time to observe your numbers during treatments and become more aware of how you feel leading up to and after treatments. You know yourself and your body better than anyone else. Now is the time to focus on how you're feeling in order to see whether there are any concerns you'd like discuss with your healthcare team at your care plan meeting.

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### How the Network Serves You

- Advocates for you;
- Answers your questions about treatment, modality choices or other issues;
- Develops and provides educational materials for you and your family;
- Works with renal professionals to improve the care given to you;
- Helps keep you informed and updated to support your involvement in your care and treatment options; and
- Evaluates and resolves grievances.

**Become involved with your facility staff, Network, and peers by joining our Patient Advisory Council (PAC). For information, please visit [www.networkofnewengland.org/consumers/patient-advisory-committee](http://www.networkofnewengland.org/consumers/patient-advisory-committee)**

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- **Make a list:** Feel prepared for your meeting by writing a list of questions you'd like to have answered at your meeting. Whether it's gaining a better understanding of what foods you can eat, or what other treatment options are available to you, the best way to ensure that all of your questions are answered are by writing them down.
- **Educate yourself by asking questions:** There are no silly questions when it comes to your health. If something doesn't make sense, or if you need something explained in a different way, don't be shy. Speak up and ask! Your healthcare team is dedicated to working with you to ensure that you are the healthiest and happiest you can be, so don't hold back your questions!
- **Partner with your healthcare team:** Taking an active role in your healthcare means that you play a role in making decisions that affect you. Decisions should be made together, and also followed through together. Throughout the year it is important that you stay active in the plan that you create during your care



plan meeting and that you continue to communicate your questions and concerns.

Scheduling a care plan meeting is a great way to start the New Year in a positive and meaningful way!

## Get Active with the Network!

**H**ave you heard about the Network's Patient Advisory Committee (PAC)? PAC representatives provide a link between the Network, patients/caretakers, and their unit staff, in order to encourage cooperative support within the New England renal community. PAC representatives are committed to actively engaging the ESRD community by enhancing facility-level communication and access to the Network's educational resources in order to improve quality of care.

The PAC's mission is simple: to identify and act upon areas of concern and support to ESRD patients, ultimately improving their quality of life.

Over the past year, the PAC has grown tremendously with dozens of newly recruited representatives throughout all six New England states. If you're interested in getting involved with the Network, connecting with the renal community, and making an active difference in your dialysis facility, contact the Network today!

**For more information or to file a grievance, please contact:**

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