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Rampant Malpractice and Safety Hazards Found in Kidney Dialysis Centers

ProPublica, the investigative reporting group, is publishing a series on the quality of care the nation's 400,000 dialysis patients get, and it's not pretty. The basic conclusion:

"Taxpayers spend more than \$20 billion a year to care for those on dialysis -- about \$77,000 per patient, more, by some accounts, than any other nation. Yet the United States continues to have one of the industrialized world's highest mortality rates for dialysis care. ...

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"At clinics from coast to coast, patients commonly receive treatment in settings that are unsanitary and prone to perilous lapses in care. Regulators have few tools and little will to enforce quality standards. Industry consolidation has left patients with fewer choices of provider. The government has withheld critical data about clinics' performance from patients, the very people who need it most. Meanwhile, the two corporate chains that dominate the dialysis-care system are consistently profitable, together making about \$2 billion in operating profits a year."

The ProPublica reporters go on to say that: "One reason the system's problems have evolved out of the health care spotlight is that kidney failure disproportionately afflicts minorities and the dispossessed."

Read more about this emerging [malpractice and safety scandal here](#).

And [here is part 2](#) of the series, which opens with a horrifying story about a woman who lost a quarter of her blood because the dialysis tube delivering the cleansed blood back to her body became dislodged and the technicians didn't notice until it was too late.

Here is one more piece of it, an [important footnote](#) about how the ProPublica reporters got the hard data on patient deaths that the government keeps hidden from the public.

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