



Dialysis & Nephrology

A biweekly report by Benesch on the
Dialysis & Nephrology Industry

DIGEST

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March 12, 2021

Calendar of Events

MARCH 15–18, 2021

Dialysis Tech ConneXion (DTX21)

For information, please click [here](#).

MARCH 18–20, 2021

Virtual Renal Physicians Association Annual Meeting

JASON GREIS and SCOTT DOWNING are speaking at the virtual annual meeting on March 20 at 10:45 am EST. Their talk is on practice governance and key document issues, including private equity investment in practices.

For information, please click [here](#).

MARCH 18–20, 2021

RPA: 2021 Annual Meeting Exhibit and Sponsor Application

For information, please click [here](#).

APRIL 6–9, 2021

12th Congress of the Vascular Access Society

For information, please click [here](#).

APRIL–MAY, 2021

Future Dates NKF Spring Clinical Meetings

For information, please click [here](#).

MAY 2–5, 2021

Voices by Renal Healthcare Association 2021 National Symposium

For information, please click [here](#).

SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

National Kidney Foundation of Illinois (NKFI) Golf Classic

For information, please click [here](#).

Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST



Please contact us if you would like to post

information regarding your upcoming events or if you'd like to guest author an article for this newsletter.

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COMPLIMENTARY WEBINAR

Preparing for Private Equity Investment in Nephrology

Thursday, April 8, 2021
11:00 A.M. CST—12:00 P.M. CST

Healthcare private equity firms continued investing in a variety of physician specialties at a fever pitch in 2020 as certain specialties proved to be particularly resilient, even during the pandemic. This accelerating trend extended into the nephrology sector in 2021 for the first time when a private equity firm made a sizable investment in this space. Significant additional private equity investment is anticipated in the nephrology space in years to come. Please join us for a complimentary webinar discussing:

- Considerations for evaluating private equity and other consolidation scenarios
- Preparing for private equity investment
- Common private equity deals structures

Speakers include:

SCOTT DOWNING
Partner,
Benesch Healthcare+

JASON GREIS
Partner,
Benesch Healthcare+

CHRIS DEGRANDE
Attorney,
Benesch Healthcare+

MATTHEW PHILLIPS
Managing Director,
City Capital Advisors

We anticipate that attendees will have a number of questions so please feel free to submit your questions in advance of the webinar by sending them to jgreis@beneschlaw.com.
Please register by clicking [HERE](#).

March 12, 2021

Please find below an important announcement from CMS delaying KCC model implementation until January 1, 2022. Please feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions.

Kidney Care Choices (KCC): Announcement

Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is announcing the Kidney Care Choices (KCC) Model start date for the first Performance Year will be delayed from April 1, 2021 to January 1, 2022. This change applies to all four options within the KCC Model: the CMS Kidney Care First (KCF) Option, and the three Comprehensive Kidney Care Contracting (CKCC) Options. Participants and stakeholders will be notified of any updates via listserv, as information becomes available. Updates for the KCC Model will also be posted to the [KCC webpage](#).

Thank You,
KCC Model Team

[Response from the Renal Physicians Association](#)

Nephrology and Dialysis Practices

MARCH 3, 2021

[AMA report suggests Medicare spending fell 19% YoY during first half of 2020; reduction in nephrology much smaller](#)

The [report](#) from the American Medical Association (AMA) found Medicare payments to physicians the first six months of 2020 were \$9.4 billion lower than during the same time the previous year. In April of last year, YoY payments fell by 57% over projected pre-pandemic levels. Billing reductions were not uniform across specialties, ranging from highs of 34% and 29% for physical therapy and ophthalmology respectively, to just a 6% drop-off in nephrology to \$1.032 billion. The AMA says specialties like nephrology, radiation oncology and hematology/oncology that are difficult to delay were more resistant to payment reductions due to the pandemic, as were services that could be provided remotely.

Source: American Medical Association

FEBRUARY 26, 2021

[Fallout for dialysis patients from Tex. weather outages include missed, abbreviated appointments](#)

A dietician at a DaVita facility in Houston said it took a week for regular dialysis schedules to resume once power outages caused by February's winter storm were rectified. However, a spokesperson at U.S. Renal remarked it will be several months before clinics work through the fluid overload caused by the disruption, adding some patients could only be on dialysis for two hours one day the first week they resumed operations. For patients on home dialysis, the news is mixed, said the nurse manager for the home dialysis and renal program at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston. Pediatric patients using peritoneal dialysis were able to continue with manual exchanges of dialysate, so no long-term repercussions are expected. Increased hospitalizations and mortality could affect adults on hemodialysis who missed or had truncated sessions due to the storm, she added.

Source: MedPage Today

March 12, 2021

Nephrology and Dialysis Practices (cont'd)

MARCH 1, 2021

Congress introduces legislation to protect live organ donors from high insurance premiums

Bipartisan, bicameral [legislation](#) was introduced in Congress by Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Tom Cotton (R-AR) as well as by Reps. Jerry Nadler (D-NY) and Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA) to protect the rights of living organ donors. The [bill](#) would protect living donors from high insurance premiums, codify Department of Labor guidance that covers living donors under the Family Medical Leave Act in the private sector and civil service and remove barriers to organ donation. It is noted that one-in-four living organ donors experience difficulty finding or paying for insurance after their procedures because of discriminatory practices, while others face job loss after taking time off to recover from their donation procedure. The proposed legislation has the support of several organ transplantation advocacy groups, including the [National Kidney Foundation](#) and the [American Society of Nephrology](#).

Source: Kirsten Gillibrand, U.S. Senate

MARCH 2, 2021

KCP calls on Congress, CDC to permit dialysis facilities to administer COVID-19 vaccines to patients

Kidney Care Partners (KCP) wrote letters to [congressional leaders](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), urging Washington to distribute COVID-19 vaccines to dialysis centers nationwide to administer to patients and healthcare workers. KCP notes patients with ESRD who develop COVID-19 have a 20% mortality rate, while CKD and ESKD patients are disproportionately negatively impacted by the pandemic. The group requests clients of dialysis providers be given the same consideration for alternate distribution processes as patients in nursing facilities, community health centers and FQHCs.

Source: Kidney Care Partners

March 12, 2021

Nephrology and Dialysis Practices (cont'd)

FEBRUARY 25, 2021

ASN urges lawmakers to send vaccines to dialysis providers to advance delivery equity

The American Society of Nephrology (ASN) [wrote](#) to the Biden Administration's COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force, describing how distributing vaccines to the nation's dialysis centers could advance the task force's goals. The group points out that more than half of patients on dialysis are from the Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American or Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (NHPI) communities, adding that a federal allocation covering these patients and the healthcare workers at these facilities would improve vaccine access to vulnerable populations that are more likely to contract the illness. Speaking to the issue of healthcare equity, the ASN states "a direct vaccine allocation would both save lives and address racial injustice at the same time."

Source: ASN

FEBRUARY 24, 2021

Reliq's virtual care platform taken up by Tex. nephrology practice to monitor CKD patients

Canadian virtual care solutions provider Reliq Health Technologies says its [iUGO Care](#) platform is being implemented by an unnamed nephrology practice in Tex. to monitor patients with CKD. The technology enables healthcare practitioners to access remote patient monitoring data in real time. For nephrologists, that means tracking medication compliance and managing patients' co-morbidities. Reliq anticipates up to 5,000 CKD patients will be onboarded onto iUGO Care by the end of the year.

Source: Reliq Health Technologies

MARCH 2, 2021

USRC to provide kidney care, dialysis to health system in Upstate N.Y.

The Mohawk Valley Health System (MVHS), based in Utica, N.Y., entered into an agreement whereby U.S. Renal Care (USRC) will take over MVHS' outpatient dialysis services. Pending regulatory approval, the handover could occur by the end of next year. As part of the deal, USRC will install new technology and dialysis equipment at facilities serving MVHS. During the transfer, MVHS will continue to offer services to ESRD patients while USRC provides administrative support.

Source: U.S. Renal Care

March 12, 2021

Nephrology and Dialysis Practices (cont'd)

MARCH 4, 2021

Renalogic gets 'significant investment' to expand use of AI-driven CKD cost-containment technology

The amount was not disclosed but Phoenix-based Renalogic was the recipient of a significant investment from Carrick Capital Planners, which specializes in supporting IT technology companies. Renalogic developed [CareINSIGHTS.ai](#), an AI-enabled, predictive modeling platform designed to contain the costs associated with CKD, particularly dialysis. Analytics identify disease progression and provide clinicians with advice for treatment practices to provide best health outcomes while minimizing cost. In choosing Renalogic, Carrick states that health solution providers for self-funded, mid-market employers represent an important strategy in care cost containment.

Source: Renalogic

VAC, ASC and Office-Based Labs

FEBRUARY 19, 2021

ASC operators USPI, SCA, Surgery Partners maintain positive outlook for 2021, anticipate M&A activity

Executives at three ASCs reveal they have warchests committed for M&A in 2021. Dan Cancelmi, the EVP and CFO of Tenet Healthcare, says its subsidiary, Dallas-based [United Surgical Partners International](#) (USPI), has between \$150 million to \$200 million allocated this year for acquisitions. Reflecting the industry's optimism, he anticipates "building the pipeline" in 2022 as well. Optum, which includes [Surgical Care Affiliates](#) (SCA), expects to add 10,000 affiliated physicians in 2021, according to UnitedHealth Group's former CEO, David Wichmann. Meanwhile, CEO Eric Evans states [Surgery Partners](#) has \$100 million in capital at the ready for 2021, with an emphasis on adding to its cardiology capacity, doubling the number of ASCs that perform the procedures as part of its normal expansion strategies.

Source: Becker's ASC Review

FEBRUARY 25, 2021

SCA to partner with Allina Health on five-year ASC plan in Twin Cities

Surgical Care Affiliates (SCA) and Minneapolis-based Allina Health are jointly leasing a property to build a new ASC in the Twin Cities market. The 18,000-square foot surgery center will have four operating rooms and should be open by 2022. Two more ASCs could be developed this year. The partners are already involved in five other surgery centers in Minneapolis-St. Paul and they plan to operate a network of facilities in the metro area in the next five years.

Source: Allina Health

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Other Interesting Industry News

MARCH 1, 2021

Fresenius introduces KidneyCare:365 care coordination program for late-stage CKD patients

Fresenius (FMCNA) says the KidneyCare:365 program provides personalized education, hands-on support and expanded care coordination to patients with late-stage CKD. The education component includes modules on:

- Kidney disease and related comorbidities;
- The importance of seeing a nephrologist;
- Eating well and healthy living; and
- Treatment options for kidney failure including transplant and home dialysis.

FMCNA president David Pollack says the KidneyCare:365 program is incorporated into value-based care arrangements with several health insurance providers.

Source: Fresenius Medical Care

MARCH 3, 2021

Optum expanding Mass. footprint with Atrius acquisition

UnitedHealth Group's board of directors approved a takeover by subsidiary Optum of Newton, Mass.-based Atrius Health, a 715-physician group. The deal was approved by Atrius and only awaits state and federal regulatory approval before being finalized. Financial terms were not released. The transaction follows on Optum's purchase of Reliant Medical Group of Worcester, Mass., in 2018 and signals the company's intention to expand in the Bay State.

Source: Becker's Hospital Review

March 12, 2021

Other Interesting Industry News (cont'd)

MARCH 3, 2021

Scientific acquires global surgical tech business of Israel's Lumenis for \$1.07B; includes kidney stone technology

The Lumenis surgical business includes laser systems, fibers and accessories used for otolaryngology and urology procedures. Included in the sale to Boston Scientific is Lumenis' Moses technology for the treatment of kidney stones. Boston Scientific says it already distributes Lumenis' urology laser products in the U.S. and Japan and expects the marriage of the two companies' technology will spur growth in the European and Asian markets. Boston Scientific anticipates the transaction to be completed in the second half of this year.

Source: Boston Scientific

Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

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