



Dialysis & Nephrology

A monthly report by Benesch on the
Dialysis & Nephrology Industry

DIGEST

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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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Calendar of Events

OCTOBER 1–JANUARY 31, 2024

Peritoneal Dialysis University

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

DECEMBER 13, 2023

Webinar: New, Updated RHA 2024 QAPI Tool

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

JANUARY 22–25, 2024

ISET Annual Meeting

Miami Beach, FL

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

FEBRUARY 23–25, 2024

ASDIN: 20th Annual Scientific Meeting

New Orleans, LA (View Sessions)

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

MARCH 23–28, 2024

SIR Annual Meeting

Salt Lake City, Utah

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

APRIL 11, 2024

RPA Nephrology Coding & Billing Workshop

Registration opens in early November.

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

APRIL 11–14, 2024

RPA: 50th Annual Meeting

Baltimore MD

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

APRIL 14–17, 2024

ANNA: National Symposium

Orlando, FL

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

APRIL 25–27, 2024

OEIS: 11th Annual National Scientific Meeting

Las Vegas, NV (Annual Meeting Agenda)

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

SEPTEMBER 20–24, 2024

ANNA: Nephrology Nursing Summit

Atlanta, GA

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

Benesch Healthcare+ Fourth Annual Nephrology and Dialysis Conference

We want to hear from you as we begin to plan our Fourth Annual Nephrology & Dialysis Conference set to take place in June, 2024.

Please click [HERE](#) to take a 3 question survey if you wish to suggest conference topics or if you wish to become more involved in the conference.

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**Dialysis &
Nephrology**
DIGEST



Each month, AKF hosts a virtual activity over Zoom that gives kids the opportunity to form friendships with peers who have shared experiences.

Children enrolled will receive a special camp welcome swag bag to kick off camp! Throughout the year, they will participate in a variety of virtual activities such as art classes, BINGO, science night, game night, trivia, and MORE!

**For more information, contact Lianna Chase
lchase@kidneyfund.org or 240-292-7047**

Together we can do **VIRTUALLY**
anything!



Thank you to the generous support of



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December 7, 2023

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Nephrology and Dialysis

NOVEMBER 8, 2023

Fresenius continues business consolidation with sale of fertility business for \$545M

A consortium consisting of KKR portfolio company [IVI RMA](#) and Spanish PE firm [GED Capital](#) agreed to pay €500 million for Eugin Group, Fresenius' fertility business. Closing of the transaction is expected to take place in Q1 2024. Fresenius purchased the company three years ago as it sought to cash in on rising infertility rates and waning government support for fertility programs. In 2022, Eugin generated sales of \$247 million. Fresenius CEO, Michael Sen, says the divestment allows the company to further prioritize and strengthen efforts to core business areas.

SOURCE: Fresenius

OCTOBER 31, 2023

DaVita agrees to settlement of class action centered on 401(k) fees

In July, a U.S. district judge [partially denied](#) the company's request to dismiss a class action brought on behalf of former workers. While the judge tossed the part of the suit dealing with funds with higher management fee expense ratios, they found the allegation employees were harmed by excessive recordkeeping fees could go ahead. In a [joint status report](#), DaVita and the plaintiffs leading the suit indicated they reached an agreement in principle during a mediation session and asked the court to give them until Dec. 30 to draft the agreement and file for preliminary approval.

Related: [DaVita, workers reach deal to settle challenge to 401\(k\) fees](#)—Bloomberg Law (sub. rec.)

SOURCE: Law360 (sub. rec.)

NOVEMBER 7, 2023

DaVita ups full-year revenue projection on higher demand

DaVita's FY2023 adjusted profit per share outlook is higher after beating revenue estimates in Q3. It's looking at a range of between \$7.80 and \$8.30 per share, an increase of between 6% and 11% versus its prior forecast. The dialysis provider cites strong demand for services for the improved financial outlook.

SOURCE: Reuters

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Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

NOVEMBER 2, 2023

DaVita research suggests cultural, language barriers prevent greater adoption of home dialysis in Black, Latinx patients

DaVita researchers met with African American dialysis patients in Houston, Philadelphia and Washington, DC, to gain their perspectives on home dialysis. Several themes ran through the focus groups, but two conclusions **reached** by DaVita were:

1. After starting dialysis, most patients and care partners were aware of the benefits of home dialysis, however fundamental cultural barriers were noted; and
2. Some barriers specific to home dialysis modality selection included the fear of being solely responsible for a complex procedure, risk of infection and loss of social interaction.

A similar exercise was undertaken within the Spanish-speaking, Mexican American community. DaVita's **conclusions** were similar in this group as with the African American group, plus:

- Physician guidance is the most important factor in the initial dialysis modality decision for Mexican American patients and care partners. Trust in a physician's recommendation is largely unquestioned; and
- Patients and care partners want earlier and more detailed education about home modalities, in English and Spanish, to inform their initial modality decision.

Related: [Poster: Sociodemographic barriers to interest and pursuit of living donation among ESKD patients](#)—DaVita

SOURCE: DaVita

OCTOBER 26, 2023

Fresenius using patient data to develop AI models for dialysis care

Fresenius claims the first phase one its Apollo Database project compiled data from over 540,000 dialysis patients in 40 countries, totaling 140 million dialysis treatments and 34 million lab assessments. The information seeded the company's AI models, which could provide insights into kidney disease treatments. Fresenius adds the database already supports 15 clinical improvement projects, including work to assess the feasibility of using an AI model to optimize the use of ESAs and iron therapies in dialysis patients.

SOURCE: Fresenius Medical Care

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December 7, 2023

Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

NOVEMBER 6, 2023

Baxter reports remote patient management digital platform reduces risk of household dialysis technique failure

Baxter points out technique failure is a leading factor in peritoneal dialysis patients being switched from being treated at home to in-center care. It claims the [Sharesource](#) remote patient management system reduces technique failure risk by 77%. The company also states its hemodialysis technology, [Theranova](#), reduced water consumption by 27% and electricity usage by 17% relative to online hemodiafiltration.

SOURCE: Baxter

NOVEMBER 2, 2023

Bipartisan bill introduced into House to provide tax credit to organ donors

The [bill](#), co-sponsored by Reps. Jerry Nadler (D.-NY) and Joe Wilson (R.-SC), would provide a one-time refundable tax credit of \$5,000 to a living organ donor who wouldn't otherwise be reimbursed for their costs. They note 93,000 Americans are on the kidney transplant waitlist, which they estimate costs the U.S. government over \$20 billion a year. The bill is endorsed by several organizations, including the American Kidney Fund, the National Kidney Foundation, the American Society of Nephrology and the Renal Physicians Association. Meanwhile, a second bipartisan [bill](#) introduced by Reps. Jay Obernolte (R.-CA) and Suzanne DelBene (D.-WA), in which qualifying for federal support for living organ donors would be based on donor income as opposed to the organ recipient's income under current law.

SOURCE: U.S. Congressman Jerry Nadler

NOVEMBER 13, 2023

Economics professor suggests large tax credit to increase number of Good Samaritan organ donors

Michael Davis, a professor at the Cox School of Business at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, explains over half-a-million people are on dialysis, less than 100,000 get on a waiting list for transplant and only 25,000 get transplants. With other avenues for collecting organs maxed out, the 100 million Americans who could donate an organ to a strangers shouldn't be ignored. Only 300 so-called Good Samaritans donated organs last year, but Davis thinks more could be convinced if there was a sufficient financial incentive. He agrees with The Coalition to Modify NOTA that donors get a \$100,000 tax credit paid out over 10 years. Although the amount seems large, Davis says it'd be a drop in the bucket compared to the \$50 billion the federal government spends yearly on chronic kidney care.

SOURCE: Dallas Morning News

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Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

NOVEMBER 6, 2023

Northwest Kidney Centers appoints three new members to C-suite

The Seattle-based dialysis provider named [Dr. Matthew Rivara](#) as Chief Medical Officer. For the past eight years, he was an associate professor of medicine at the University of Washington, specializing in nephrology and with expertise in CMO management and medical operations. Appointed Chief Financial Officer was [Jennifer Eslava](#). For the past six years, she was Executive Director and Regional Controller for the state of Washington at Kaiser Permanente. [Heather Thomasson](#) was hired as Chief Nursing Officer. She was most recently the Director of Nursing Services at MultiCare Health System.

SOURCE: Northwest Kidney Centers

NOVEMBER 2, 2023

Outgoing ASN president cites staffing, environmental footprint as future challenges in dialysis

Michelle Josephson notes the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) made progress in organ transplant services but says more reforms are necessary to maximize access to donated organs and ensure the transplant process is transparent and equitable. Moving forward, Josephson identifies two areas of focus for the ASN, including:

1. Workforce issues—nephrology isn't unique in that it has shortages in healthcare professionals in the specialty, an issue exacerbated by the pandemic. She advocates for more fellowship training in home modalities; and
2. Environment—dialysis providers must be more cognizant of the negative impacts their activities have on the environment, citing the 265 billion liters of water used by the sector annually and take measures to mitigate that use. She also says ASN should continue to collaborate with other stakeholders on education, innovation and clinical pathways to address the impact of climate change on kidney health.

SOURCE: Healio (sub. rec.)

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Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

NOVEMBER 3, 2023

Study finds Quanta home dialysis system improves outcomes over in-center treatment

Quanta's dialysis system is FDA-approved for acute dialysis and a study looked at whether it maintains its efficacy in a home setting. The trial, at 12 hemodialysis (HD) centers, included adults with kidney failure undergoing dialysis for 90 days or more. They received HD and training in home HD at the centers for four to eight weeks. Participants deemed competent performed supervised home HD during a transition week, then with a care partner for eight weeks. Performing self-care home HD with a care partner with the Quanta system four times per week provided 25% greater dialysis adequacy than the standard three times per week in a facility.

SOURCE: Healio (sub. rec.)

NOVEMBER 9, 2023

Analysis of patients referred to kidney supportive care service suggests that generally, they die in acute care settings

Kidney supportive care provides holistic care to patients coming to the end of their dialysis life. Researchers looked at the medical reason for referral, choices involving advance care planning and preferred place of death. Retrospective analysis of 132 patients who stopped hemodialysis and 25 who ended peritoneal dialysis between 2016 and 2023 finds the average time between removal of services and patient death was seven days. It was also revealed patients withdrew from dialysis around 205 days after referral for kidney supportive care. The data suggest half of patients died in an acute hospital, 24% at home and 23% in a palliative care unit. Meanwhile, of the patients who had indicated their preference, 47% wished to die at home, 22% chose to die in a palliative care unit and 26% preferred to die in an acute hospital. In many cases, patients' final wishes weren't fulfilled, however, the study found the involvement of kidney supportive care providers increased the odds of them dying where they preferred to over 50%.

SOURCE: Healio (sub. rec.)

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Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

NOVEMBER 21, 2023

Fresenius hikes 2023 earnings outlook following settlement of legal dispute with U.S. government

The company filed a complaint against the U.S. Department of Defence in 2019 over the Tricare program, which provided reimbursement for dialysis treatments for service members. Fresenius challenged actions by Tricare administrators to reduce the compensation rate for dialysis treatments provided to beneficiaries. Tricare administrators acknowledged they recast invoicing codes and declined to change or abandon it. That case was settled for \$191 million, which Fresenius will apply to its debt in Q4. With the windfall, the dialysis provider upped its FY2023 revenue growth forecast from the low single-digit percentage range to between 12% and 14%.

SOURCE: Fresenius

VAC, ASC and Office-Based Labs

NOVEMBER 14, 2023

DOJ drops antitrust case over healthcare hiring agreements

The federal department filed a [motion](#) in TX to dismiss an indictment against ASC chain SCA Health for allegedly agreeing with competitors to not poach employees. In Jan. 2021, SCA Health and related entities were charged with conspiring with other healthcare companies to suppress competition between them for senior-level employees. SCA Health allegedly had agreements with an unnamed company in TX between 2010 and 2017 and another in CO from 2012 to 2017. A DOJ spokesperson didn't respond to a request for comment, while a representative for Surgical Care Affiliates called the move the right outcome. The move comes amid a series of defeats in other criminal antitrust cases in federal courts throughout the U.S.

SOURCE: Law360 (sub. rec.)

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VAC, ASC and Office-Based Labs (cont'd)

NOVEMBER 27, 2023

Opinion: Standardized care for PAD would save millions of lives, lower health costs

Dr. Anahita Dua, a vascular surgeon and co-director of the Peripheral Artery Disease Center and Limb Evaluation and Preservation Program at Mass General, says treatment guidelines exist for peripheral artery disease (PAD) but there are few incentives or penalties for following them and no care standards. Physicians choose the type of treatment, leading to care disparities for low-income and Black patients, who are more likely to lose a limb to PAD and get saddled with higher costs for hospitalizations. Dua states a standard is needed that considers amputation as a last resort and incentivizes the treatment of conditions that lead to PAD, like diabetes or hypertension. She adds a standardized regimen with sufficient oversight could save Medicare, which covers most PAD patients, millions each year.

SOURCE: The New York Times (sub. rec.)

NOVEMBER 15, 2023

VAC advocacy group calls on Congress to pass legislation halting CMS payment cuts

The Dialysis Vascular Access Coalition (DVAC) says the CMS final rule will cut payments to office-based dialysis vascular access service providers by 6% to 7% in 2024. Coupled with previous cuts, the group claims some practices could see reimbursements reduced by 20% by 2025. DVAC notes almost one-third of centers closed since 2017, in large part because of cuts to Medicare and expects more facilities will shut down, putting patient care at risk. The coalition is calling on the House to pass a bipartisan bill that would prevent cuts to office-based specialists for the next two years.

SOURCE: Dialysis Vascular Access Coalition

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Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

VAC, ASC and Office-Based Labs (cont'd)

NOVEMBER 1, 2023

Envision Healthcare, Surgery Partners highlight important deals in ASC space

Becker's considered three deals involving four ASC chains expected to shake up the industry:

1. Envision Healthcare **filed** for bankruptcy in May and will spin out its ASC subsidiary AmSurg, which will be taken over by creditor Pacific Investment Management;
2. Surgery Partners is **merging** with NorCal Orthopedic Surgery Center, an out-of-network ASC with nine operating facilities and 25 physician partners; and
3. UnitedHealth Group, through its Optum division, is **seeking** regulatory approval to increase its stake in Guilford Surgery Center of CT from 49% to 58%.

SOURCE: Becker's ASC Review

NOVEMBER 15, 2023

Avanza finds number of hospital systems' owning ASCs rose 17% since 2019

Avanza Healthcare Strategies **says** four years ago, 41% of hospital systems owned at least one ASC. In 2023, that number grew to 48% and it expects it'll cross the 50% threshold in the next few years. Avanza says hospital systems that may be reluctant to spend coming out the pandemic are investing in ASCs, worried they'll miss the opportunity the sector affords. Seventy-one percent of survey respondents said the increased attention being paid to ASCs comes from wanting to increase their surgical capacity. That rationale overtook "respond to consumer-driven trends" (49%) and "reduce costs" (34%) as the number one reason hospitals are accelerating their exposure to ASCs.

SOURCE: Avanza Healthcare Strategies

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For more information regarding our nephrology, dialysis and office-based lab experience, or if you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please contact:

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