



# Dialysis & Nephrology

A biweekly report by Benesch on the  
Dialysis & Nephrology Industry

# DIGEST

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April 7, 2021

## 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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### Calendar of Events

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](#).

MAY 2–5, 2021

#### 2021 ANNA Annual Symposium

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

SEPTEMBER 24–25, 2021

#### OEIS 8th Annual National Scientific Meeting

JASON GRIES will be speaking at this event.

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

SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

#### National Kidney Foundation of Illinois (NKFI) Golf Classic

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

**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](mailto:jgreis@beneschlaw.com).  
Please register by clicking [HERE](#).

Calendar of Events (cont'd)

**Dialysis &  
Nephrology**  
DIGEST

SAVE THE DATE

## Benesch Healthcare+ First Annual Dialysis and Nephrology Conference



**Thursday, December 2, 2021**  
**8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
Cocktail reception to follow  
**The Gwen Hotel**  
521 North Rush Street | Chicago, IL 60611

Please join us for this full-day conference addressing business and legal issues facing nephrology and dialysis providers. Hear from industry leaders discussing current and future trends in care delivery, business and payment models and legal and regulatory issues.

Please contact MEGAN THOMAS ([mthomas@beneschlaw.com](mailto:mthomas@beneschlaw.com)) for more information about this event or if you require assistance.

Invitation to follow.

**Benesch  
Healthcare+**

[www.beneschlaw.com](http://www.beneschlaw.com)

April 7, 2021

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## Nephrology and Dialysis Practices

MARCH 30, 2021

### **Cricket Health unveils value-based kidney care model for MA plans**

A program from startup kidney care provider Cricket Health is designed for MA plans managing care for patients with end-stage renal disease who are transitioning from traditional Medicare. MA plans can use Cricket's analytics platform to identify members at high risk for kidney disease. They are then assigned a care team that includes a nurse, a pharmacist, a social worker, a dietitian and a patient peer mentor. Home visits will be offered to high-risk patients and the system is supposed to reduce referrals, boost the use of home dialysis and cut back on unneeded care. Cricket states members can connect with the care team over the phone or virtually. The goals of the program are to slow the progression of kidney disease and support patients in accessing services.

Source: Cricket Health

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MARCH 26, 2021

### **White House decision to permit COVID-19 vaccinations at dialysis clinics elicits strong support from industry players**

Dialysis providers and kidney health organizations lobbied the White House for several weeks to allow COVID-19 vaccinations at dialysis centers due to the poor outcomes of patients with kidney illnesses who contract the coronavirus. In a [collaboration](#) between the industry, the American Society of Nephrology (ASN), the Biden Administration and the CDC, vaccines will be distributed to dialysis treatment centers so the approximately half million patients who typically go three times a week for treatment can get vaccinated at their place of care. The move, part of the White House's \$10-billion COVID-19 distribution effort, has been applauded by the [CDC](#), the [ASN](#) and the [National Kidney Foundation](#) as well as industry players such as [DaVita](#), [Fresenius](#) and [US Renal Care](#).

Source: Renal & Urology News

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MARCH 23, 2021

### **DaVita, Fresenius team up for home dialysis initiative using NxStage technology**

Between them, DaVita and Fresenius control 80% of the U.S. kidney dialysis market. Through a partnership, DaVita clients will have access to Fresenius' home dialysis system that it inherited as part of the \$1.9-billion acquisition of NxStage Medical in 2019. As well, DaVita patients will be permitted to use a platform integrated with the NxStage technology to collect and share individual treatment information with clinics and care teams. The collaboration stems from the increased demand for home dialysis due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Fresenius notes one-in-seven treatments in 2020 were performed in a home setting, adding home dialysis grew by 37% last year.

Source: DaVita

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## Nephrology and Dialysis Practices (cont'd)

MARCH 29, 2021

### **DaVita report spells out company's diversity efforts**

In DaVita's first-ever Diversity & Belonging [report](#), it states that globally, 78% of its workforce and partners are women, while 54% are people of color. On the corporate side of the ledger, DaVita notes that among leaders with profit and loss responsibility, 52% are women and 27% are people of color. The company adds that 74% of managers and 54% of directors are women. DaVita says through external recruiting strategies and career development programs, it aims to continue building a diverse leadership pipeline.

Source: DaVita

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MARCH 29, 2021

### **Baxter initiative aims to increase awareness, develop interventions relating to CKD in predominately black neighborhoods**

Over the next nine months, Baxter will provide \$600,000 to the not-for-profit [Central Area of the Links](#), which operates in 17 states. Local chapters of the organization will engage with healthcare professionals, faith-based organizations and civic leaders to formulate programs and interventions related to the prevention, detection and management of chronic kidney disease. One component is the Black Kidney Awareness, Resources and Education (K.A.R.E.) program, a tool to educate communities about factors that contribute to the disproportionate barriers Black Americans face in kidney care and provides guidance about managing CKD and overall kidney wellness. Baxter says the partnership with Central Area of the Links is part of its [ACT: Activating Change Today](#) initiative to advance social justice for the Black community.

Source: Baxter

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## Nephrology and Dialysis Practices (cont'd)

MARCH 25, 2021

### **Mich. develops five-year CKD program focused on early identification, treatment**

The National Kidney Foundation of Michigan (NKFM) and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) developed the strategy, which includes a section on CKD and COVID-19. The plan, set to run through 2026, has four goals:

1. Transform kidney care using kidney disease data, shared metrics and evidence-based strategies;
2. Increase awareness of preventable kidney disease;
3. Increase the reach of evidence-based programs and policy/system/environmental changes; and
4. Maximize financial sustainability.

The partners explain that by addressing early identification and treatment and providing insights about social determinants of health that relate to kidney diseases, a dent could be put into the \$1.5 billion Mich. pays annually for CKD-related Medicaid costs.

**Source: The Davison Index**

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MARCH 18, 2021

### **NKF suggests further study to increase pool of candidates for kidney transplantation**

The National Kidney Foundation (NKF) **reviewed** the Kidney Disease Improving Global Outcomes' (KDIGO) guideline for the evaluation and management of kidney transplant candidates. While endorsing the findings in the global report, the NKF says in the American context, it notes kidney transplantation remains the gold standard for kidney failure treatment but that the risks and benefits of the procedure need to be better understood. Of special significance are patients considered high-risk because they are elderly or have obesity, frailty or cardiovascular comorbidities. The NKF recommends further scientific research to determine best practices for those patients, as well as for individuals undergoing bariatric surgery or oncology treatment who might benefit from kidney transplantation. NKF also suggests:

- Improving referral to transplantation;
- Maximizing the use of available organs; and
- Enhancing equity of access to transplantation through better education and social supports.

**Source: National Kidney Foundation**

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## Nephrology and Dialysis Practices (cont'd)

MARCH 30, 2021

### **ASN: Tool developed to assess patients' home dialysis experiences**

Researchers at the University of Washington noted that unlike in-center hemodialysis, there is no similar patient experience metric for patients undergoing treatment at home. To address this oversight, they conducted a literature review and interviewed dialysis patients, nurses and nephrologists to come up a web-based assessment. The 26-item Home Dialysis Care Experience instrument, [published](#) in *CJASN*, balances the expectations of clinicians with those of the patients they serve. Dr. Matthew Rivara, who headed the initiative, points out that in reviewing their data, researchers were struck by the importance all stakeholders in home dialysis place on consistent communication and care coordination. It was rating more highly than metrics like facility cleanliness and the timeliness of laboratory results and appointments.

**Source: American Society of Nephrology**

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## Other Interesting Industry News

MARCH 30, 2021

### **SOC Telemed's acquisition of acute telemedicine provider Access Physicians finalized**

Reston, Va.-based SOC Telemed says the \$194-million takeover of Access Physicians strengthens its position as the largest pure-play provider of acute care telemedicine in the U.S. The merger broadens SOC Telemed's national footprint, with access to nearly 1,000 hospitals and other care facilities in 47 states. SOC Telemed claims the combined entity will leverage its platform established for patients in neurology, psychiatry, critical care and pulmonology with Access Physicians' offerings in infectious disease, cardiology, maternal-fetal medicine and nephrology.

**Source: SOC Telemed**

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MARCH 24, 2021

### **Anthem to acquire home-based nursing management platform developer myNEXUS**

myNEXUS, based in Brentwood, Tenn., is a benefits management company that provides online platforms for payors in the home-based nursing services sector. It delivers clinical support for 1.7 million MA members in 20 states. Anthem EVP Prakash Patel says the acquisition aligns with the company's strategy of providing integrated, holistic multi-site care and support. Besides the online platform, the myNEXUS system has a clinical staff of over 250 clinicians to coordinate care. Terms of the transaction weren't disclosed but Anthem expects it to be finalized in Q2 of this year.

**Source: Anthem**

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## Other Interesting Industry News (cont'd)

MARCH 30, 2021

### **Healthcare consulting firm HSG develops strategy for healthcare systems to navigate 2021 MPFS modifications**

HSG, a healthcare consulting firm based in Louisville, Ky., contends the modifications to the 2021 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) will place a burden on direct care providers while providing an opportunity for health systems to adapt their compensation structures from volume-based to value-based models. The company developed a plan to address the main impacts expected from the MPFS changes, particularly regarding:

Coding: Evaluating changes in coding patterns and comparing any differences with historic performance to measure its effect on compensation and reimbursement;

Compensation: It's predicted compensation for primary care and non-procedural medical specialty care providers will increase while procedure-based specialty care provider compensation will either decrease or become more quality/outcome focused; and

Value-based reimbursement: To ensure no revenue opportunities are missed, bundled payment initiatives and value-based reimbursement have to be addressed.

Source: HSG

# Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

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