



Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

A monthly report by Benesch on the Dialysis & Nephrology Industry

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September 7, 2023

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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

SEPTEMBER 8, 2023

2023 RHA Board Elections Close

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

SEPTEMBER 10–16, 2023

ANNA: 2023 Nephrology Nurses Week

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

SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

ISN/ASDIN POCUS Webinar

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

SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

OEIS Legal Webinar: Whistleblowers: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly

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

SEPTEMBER 22–24, 2023

10th Asian Pacific Chapter Meeting of the International Society for Peritoneal Dialysis

New Delhi, India

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

OCTOBER 1, 2023

Peritoneal Dialysis University

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

OCTOBER 4–6, 2023

2023 RHA Annual Conference

Memphis, TN

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

OCTOBER 14–16, 2023

2023 ANNA Nephrology Nursing Practice, Management, & Leadership Conference

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

OCTOBER 20, 2023

Become An Advocate for Excellence in Nephrology Practice!, Washington, DC

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

OCTOBER 20, 2023

California Medical Association: Registration now open for 2023 OMSS Assembly, Los Angeles

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

NOVEMBER 11–14, 2023

American Medical Association Interim Meeting House of Delegates

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

APRIL 11, 2024

RPA Nephrology Coding and Billing Seminar, Baltimore, MD

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

APRIL 11–14, 2024

Renal Physicians Association 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 2024 Annual National Scientific Meeting

Las Vegas, NV

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

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Nephrology and Dialysis

JUNE 27, 2023

[FTC, DoJ propose changes to HSR Act for more effective, efficient merger reviews](#)

The FTC, along with the Assistant Attorney General of the Antitrust Division, proposed changes to the premerger notification form and associated instructions, as well as the premerger notification rules implementing the Hart-Scott Rodino Act. The proposed changes will enable agencies to screen transactions for competition issues more effectively and efficiently. Key proposals include:

- Provision of details about transaction rationale and details surrounding investment vehicles or corporate relationships;
- Provision of information related to products or services in both horizontal products and services, and non-horizontal business relationships such as supply agreements;
- Provision of projected revenue streams, transactional analyses and internal documents describing market conditions, and structure of entities involved, such as private equity investments;
- Provision of details regarding previous acquisitions; and
- Disclosure of information that screens for labor market issues by classifying employees based on current Standard Occupational Classification system categories.

The proposed changes also address Congressional concerns that subsidies from foreign entities of concern can distort the competitive process or otherwise alter the business strategies of subsidized firms.

SOURCE: FTC

AUGUST 31, 2023

[Audio: Author of 'How to Make a Killing' discusses duopoly of dialysis industry](#)

Tom Mueller appeared on the “Fraud in America” [podcast](#) to discuss his book on the history of dialysis care in the U.S., “How to Make a Killing.” He contends the for-profit motive of dialysis providers like Fresenius and DaVita is good for shareholders but not so good for patients. Mueller talks about how a whistleblower helped undercover a kickback scheme by DaVita whereby medical practices were being compensated for referrals. The ensuing trial led to a \$400-million settlement. He adds the federal government and Congress aren’t performing enough oversight of the industry but also thinks Medicare reimbursements for dialysis services are too small and leaves the system open to abuse.

Related: [Podcast: The Journey Continues Season 3, Episode 13 ‘It’s a Hobby’](#) —NKF of Illinois

SOURCE: TAF Coalition

September 7, 2023

Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

JULY 27, 2023

Judge partially dismisses federal benefits lawsuit from former DaVita workers

DaVita sought to have the ERISA suit by former employees tossed. The plaintiffs allege the company's retirement plan was subjected to excessive administrative and bookkeeping fees, which drove down the value of the portfolio. A CO federal judge **granted** in part and dismissed in part DaVita's motion to dismiss. On the breach of fiduciary claim issue, he said the plaintiffs couldn't target funds with higher fees unless they invested in one of them. However, he denied dismissal of a recordkeeping fee claim, as well as a failure to monitor the claim, citing the fact the fiduciary breach claim wasn't totally dismissed. The judge gave the plaintiffs until Aug. 31 to file an amended complaint.

Related: [DaVita must face some 401\(k\) fee claims in would-be class suit](#)—Bloomberg Law (sub. rec.)

SOURCE: Law360 (sub. rec.)

AUGUST 9, 2023

Fresenius partners with IL health provider in on-site dialysis program targeting rural patients

The deal with [Sarah Bush Lincoln](#), a health system based in Mattoon, IL, means on-site dialysis will be conducted at the provider's hospital. Fresenius notes local patients requiring hemodialysis are traveling up to 100 miles for service. The hospital opted for the [NxStage VersiHD](#) system due to its ease of operation, network connectivity and adaptability for home dialysis. It also cited: NxStage doesn't require a purchase or lease-to-own agreement, allowing it to choose a month-to-month license for greater flexibility; The NxStage service model sends it a replacement device when the machine needs servicing; and The blood tubing and dialyzer cartridge are self-contained, eliminating the need for heat or chemical disinfection of the system.

SOURCE: Fresenius Medical Care

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Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

AUGUST 3, 2023

[InterWell Health adds 20+ nephrology practices to national network](#)

With the latest additions, [InterWell Health](#) claims 135 nephrology practices, with 1,700 nephrologists, in 38 states are part of its national network. The company, created from the merger of Fresenius Health Partners, Cricket Health and InterWell Health, provides kidney care through value-based agreements with physician practices. Embedding care coordinators in the practice, it provides personalized patient education, leverages advanced predictive models and offers nephrology-specific EHR technology.

Related: [Interwell Health capitalizing on shift of specialty care heading into the home, prioritizing value-based contracting](#)—Home Health Care News

SOURCE: InterWell Health

AUGUST 23, 2023

[Humana agrees to VBA with InterWell for members in 13 states with CKD, ESKD](#)

Humana says [InterWell Health's](#) value-based kidney care program will be made available to most of its MA HMO and PPO members living with CKD in 13 states, including AR, AZ, CO, KS, NC, NM, NY, OH, OK, PA, SC, TX and WV. As well, all Humana members with ESKD will be eligible for the InterWell program. Humana members will have access to InterWell's team of nephrologists, as well as in-home virtual support from dietitians, nurses, social workers, pharmacists and care coordinators.

SOURCE: InterWell Health

AUGUST 23, 2023

[Strive Health inks long-term deal with CVS subsidiary for late-stage CKD, ESKD patient care in 21 states](#)

[Oak Street Health](#), a CVS company providing value-based primary care, has a JV with [InterWell Health](#) called OakWell to provide primary care to ESKD patients directly in the dialysis center. A multi-year deal with Denver's [Strive Health](#) will explore specialized population health capabilities for people with late-stage CKD and ESKD. The approach will be applied at Oak Street's operations in 21 states. CVS Health Ventures was one of the primary investors in a Series C funding round at Strive Health, which raised \$166 million.

SOURCE: Strive Health

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Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

AUGUST 16, 2023

CMS: Year one of ETC model produced no Medicare cost savings

The ESRD Treatment Choices (ETC) model was introduced in 2021 by CMS to determine if financial incentives would have any bearing on the uptake of home dialysis and kidney transplants among Medicare beneficiaries, while reducing Medicare costs. A study by Lewin Group for CMS [finds](#) in the first year of ETC, the waitlist for a kidney transplant rose by 4%, while the number of transplant procedures performed went up by 10%. There was no change in the rate of home dialysis use YoY, but patient training on those systems increased by 9%. Other findings included:

- No reduction in the number of hospitalizations or changes in the use of other types of acute care services, including hospital readmissions and use of outpatient EDs;
- No improvement in cost savings, either under Medicare Parts A and B payments per patient per month; and
- Patients treated in the ETC model did not have a change in experience of care.

SOURCE: [Healio](#) (sub. rec.)

AUGUST 29, 2023

Panoramic Health builds out TX value-based kidney care operations with KSST collaboration

The agreement with Corpus Christi-based [Kidney Specialists of South Texas](#) (KSST) is the fifth such collaboration from Panoramic Health this year in the state, following deals with nephrology practices in [San Antonio](#), [Houston](#) and [Odessa](#), as well as a VAC in [Houston](#). KSST will leverage Panoramic Health's value-based kidney care model, which includes predictive analytics, clinical workflows and holistic care coordination in its three locations in the Coastal Bend region.

SOURCE: [Panoramic Health](#)

JULY 26, 2023

FL practice employing Duo Health's value-based kidney care model

Nephrology operation [National Kidney Partners](#) has 10 care centers in FL specializing in kidney care, hypertension care, cardiovascular care and vascular access. It'll employ [Duo Health's](#) value-based model and advanced technology designed to support patients with CKD and ESKD, including through home-based treatment programs.

SOURCE: [Duo Health/National Kidney Partners](#)

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Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

AUGUST 31, 2023

Orlando-based nephrology practice to employ Evergreen Nephrology's holistic care experience

Nashville-based [Evergreen Nephrology](#) will provide holistic care and support to patients of [Nephrology Associates of Central Florida](#) (NACFLA) with CKD. NACFLA has nine locations and was one of the first practices in FL to offer vascular access for dialysis patients. Evergreen says the agreement means it has over 700 provider partners across 17 states.

SOURCE: Evergreen Nephrology

AUGUST 1, 2023

Signify Health develops in-home kidney health evaluation for MA members

A subsidiary of CVS, [Signify Health](#) added in-home kidney health screenings to its [Diagnostic and Preventive Services](#) offering. Free for MA members, the evaluation, which includes urinalysis (uACR) and estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR), is designed to detect early signs of kidney disease. Test results also enable Signify Health to formulate a care plan, including additional testing, lifestyle changes, pharmacological treatment and referral to a nephrologist.

SOURCE: Signify Health

AUGUST 1, 2023

PHM Healthmap raises \$100M to support expansion of kidney management business; unveils PR partnership

Tampa-based population health management firm [Healthmap Solutions](#) reports the majority of the funding came from its primary investor, [WindRose Health Investors](#), with contributions from other existing financial partners. The company services over 160,000 patients with kidney diseases and says the \$100-million fundraise will enable it to expand its business and start generating earnings. Healthmap's platform uses predictive analytics, machine learning, clinical expertise and face-to-face interactions in support of holistic, patient-centered kidney care. Meanwhile, the PHM has an [agreement](#) to provide care solutions to members of health insurer [Triple-S](#) of San Juan, PR with kidney diseases, [GuideWell](#) is the parent company of Triple-S, as well as a Healthmap investor, so this arrangement further strengthening the ties between the two companies.

SOURCE: Healthmap Solutions

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Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

AUGUST 9, 2023

Calif. startup raises \$28M to support clinical trials of mobile hemodialysis system

[Diality](#) didn't divulge the investors for the \$28-million funding round but says the proceeds will support a clinical trial of its mobile hemodialysis unit in a home setting and a 510(k) filing for use in healthcare settings. The device is intended for use by professional staff, as well as by patients and their caregivers. Diality claims the technology covers "the broadest range of prescriptions, from low-dose extended treatments to high-dose in-center treatments."

SOURCE: Diality

AUGUST 22, 2023

Innovaccer unveils AI automation suite for value-based care

[Innovaccer](#) launched an AI suite called Sara for Healthcare designed for automated solutions to population health management, care management and coordination, customer relationship management, value-based care and self-serve analytics. The four Sara-powered products are:

1. Sara for Insights, which is designed to help executives and analysts get fast answers to complex queries;
2. Sara for Care Management, which aims to assist care coordinators with documentation and planning;
3. Sara for Point of Care, which is designed to help clinicians with EHR administration and documentation; and
4. Sara for Experience Center, which aims to help contact center agents by automating tasks and optimizing processes.

SOURCE: HIT Consultant

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Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

JULY 27, 2023

U.S. House passes bill to improve organ donation process; companion Senate bill in committee

The American Society of Nephrology (ASN) applauded the House of Representatives for unanimously passing [H.R.2544](#). President Michelle Josephson says the bill will establish a “patient-centered transplant system” and improve waitlists for donated organs. The bill would amend how the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) funds and manages the Organ Procurement Transplantation Network (OPTN). It would authorize HRSA to award grants, contracts or cooperative agreements to support the OPTN, while eliminating a cap on the amount of available funding for supporting the network. A companion bill, [S.1668](#), was referred to the Senate’s Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.

SOURCE: [Healio \(sub. rec.\)](#)

AUGUST 7, 2023

AKF calls on feds to add dialysis machines to Strategic National Stockpile

The Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) is a group of vaccines, pharmaceuticals and medical supplies that would likely be in short supply during a national emergency. While items like IV tubing and ventilator components are in the SNS, dialysis machines aren’t. In 2019, the federal government leased 50 Tablo hemodialysis machines from Outset Medical, which were deployed during the COVID pandemic. That contract lapsed in 2021, so the American Kidney Fund (AKF) is imploring Congress not to overlook patients on dialysis as it [considers](#) reauthorizing funding for the SNS.

SOURCE: [Stat](#)

AUGUST 10, 2023

VA joins patient advocate AAKP to lobby for better health outcomes for Veterans with kidney diseases

The collaboration builds off long-standing relationships between the government department and the patient advocacy group. The American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP) has “extensive Veteran and Veteran family representation” on its board and its membership rolls. As well, the AAKP’s Veterans Health Initiative, launched in 2017, is designed to advance research, innovation and policies safeguarding the highest standards in kidney care and treatment for all Veterans, whether inside or outside the VA medical system. The formal collaboration is to improve health outcomes and enhance the overall quality of life for Veterans with kidney diseases.

SOURCE: [AAKP](#)

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Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

AUGUST 31, 2023

RPA fellowship provides policy guidance to early career nephrologists

The RPA Public Policy Fellowship for Early Career Nephrologists is a one-year opportunity for clinicians in practice for five years or less. Successful applicants gain an understanding of policy issues related to kidney care as well as the workings of the RPA. Fellows attend RPA Board of Directors meetings, are mentored by a member of the board and serve on committees. In addition, the RPA sends them to its AGM, the Policy Advocacy and Leadership Forum and other events. Applications open in the fall and close in late Nov., with selections by the end of the year. For 2023, the RPA selected five fellows.

SOURCE: RPA

AUGUST 18, 2023

CDMS secures accreditation agreement with NDAC

The National Dialysis Accreditation Commission (NDAC) and California Dialysis Management Services (CDMS) have agreed to an accreditation deal that will allow all CDMS clinics to apply for NDAC accreditation with Medicare deeming status certification. As part of the agreement, NDAC will be the exclusive provider for all 12 ESRD clinics in Southern California.

SOURCE: National Dialysis Accreditation Commission

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For more information regarding our nephrology, dialysis
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