

**Dialysis Leaders Recommend Policy Changes to Address
Under-Utilization of Home Dialysis**
Alliance is Launched to Advance Consensus Recommendations

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(Washington, D.C.) On the heels of the first-ever National Summit on Home Dialysis Policy, organizers of the Summit released a report reflecting the views of the delegates— top leaders in the kidney disease patient, clinician, facility and industry communities – on federal policy steps that can improve utilization of home dialysis for patients who can benefit from this often advantageous form of treatment. Home dialysis, including peritoneal dialysis (PD) and home hemodialysis (HHD), are alternatives to in-center treatment, which requires patients to visit a clinic three times a week. Many of the Summit organizers also announced they have formed a new alliance, called the Alliance for Home Dialysis, to advance the recommendations identified at the Summit.

The Summit’s “Report of the Delegates” highlights key findings from a March 29th meeting in Washington, DC where experts probed why, despite widely accepted and well-documented benefits of home dialysis — improved outcomes associated with more consistent treatments, enhanced patient satisfaction, improved quality of life, and lower costs compared to in-center treatment — fewer than ten percent of the more than 390,000 current U.S. dialysis patients receive treatment at home. Current rates of home dialysis utilization reflect a steep decline from the 1970s, when almost 40% of U.S. dialysis patients were treated in-home.

The Report of the Delegates reflects hurdles that leaders say hinder optimal utilization of home dialysis. Panelist Vanessa Evans, a Massachusetts resident who has end-stage renal disease and been on dialysis for 15 years, said while she switched to home dialysis, most patients do not receive adequate guidance and training to help them move to home dialysis. As Evans said at the Summit, “I don’t think that [patients are] getting the information or the education they need.”

To close the information gap for patients and overcome other challenges, the Report of the Delegates found that policymakers should work with stakeholders in the dialysis community to confront three areas presently causing much of the challenge:

- **Accessibility:** Both patients and clinicians face array of hurdles in education, training, and infrastructure that hinder equalized access to home dialysis.

- **Accountability:** Utilization of home dialysis can be improved through measures within government programs that are designed to recognize and support excellence in the delivery of home dialysis services.
- **Aligning Incentives:** Reimbursement policies, regulation of new technologies and other policy incentives can be realigned to better support federal policy goals of expanding access to home dialysis.

The Report of the Delegates includes 15 distinct recommendations to serve these goals, including that federal policymakers should:

- Maintain parity for home and in-center dialysis in Medicare reimbursement;
- Support home dialysis mentoring programs, particularly those that use existing patients as mentors; and
- Align federal and state regulatory requirements for home therapies, such as revising the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Conditions for Coverage requirements, to reflect differences in home and in-center dialysis.

As the new Alliance was announced, Troy Zimmerman, Vice President of Government Relations for the National Kidney Foundation, noted, “To truly improve course and make home dialysis more readily available to those who can benefit from it, the patient, clinician and industry communities must build from today’s Report and continue to work together on our common goals. The Summit and the Report of the Delegates is an important first step that can help guide our work going forward.”

Summit organizers and supporters will begin work through the new Alliance for Home Dialysis to dialogue with federal policymakers and advance targeted policy improvements in the three consensus areas – Accessibility, Accountability and Aligning Incentives – that emerged in the context of Summit leader discussions.

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