

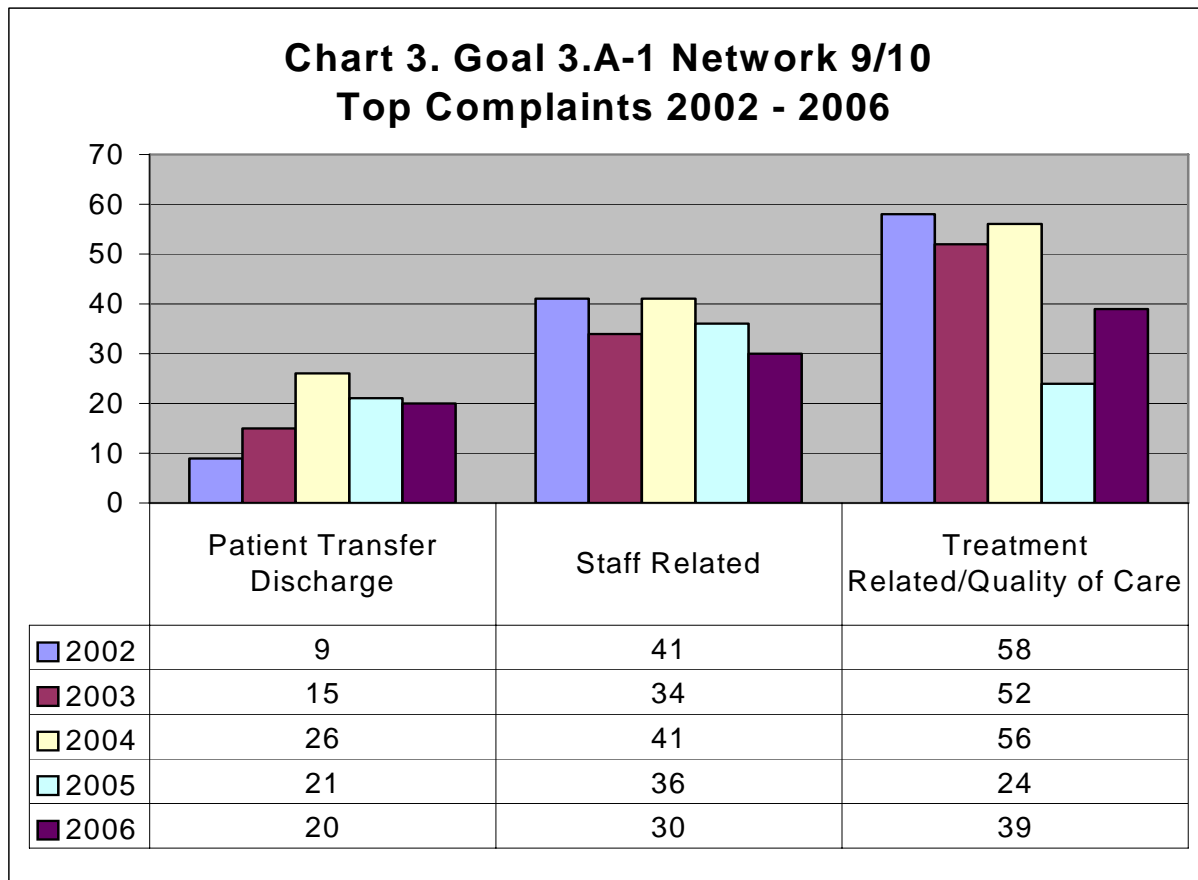
**The Renal Network, Inc.
2006 Annual Report – ESRD Network 9/10**

3. Goal 3 - A. Concerns & Complaints.

Complaints are received in the Network office through direct contact with the beneficiary, though a telephone call or a written letter. The Network maintains a user-friendly, toll-free line to encourage patients to contact the office directly.

Tracking of complaints received are reported through the CMS quarterly report format as investigations or grievances. Investigations are the result of complaints brought to the attention of the Network through a variety of means.

Network staff attempted to intervene as soon as a complaint was received, to resolve problems before they escalated into a formal grievance situation. Often, the Network staff member acted as a mediator between the dialysis facility and the patient to objectively work out problems. Patient Services staff members also coached patients on positive ways to approach facility staff, provided resources and accurate information regarding concerns, and provided assistance as needed. During 2006, Network staff members were called upon to assist with 128 patient complaints. The primary concerns regarded quality of care issues and staff related issues, which have consistently been the top concerns over time. Patient concerns over being involuntarily discharged have increased over 50% in the last four years. This is detailed in Chart 3.Goal 3.A-1.



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Through the MRB, The Network analyzes facility-specific complaints/grievance data to identify patterns of concerns at the facility or Network level. No specific patterns were detected in the 2006 complaint/grievance data, either by facility or LDO affiliation. All facilities were below 5% of complaints from their patient population.

Network staff also assisted facilities with their concerns about patient issues. Staff tried to help facilities understand patient issues from different viewpoints, brainstorm alternative approaches to resolve issues, and identify behavior and control issues. Staff assisted facilities with patient behavioral issues to keep them from escalating to involuntary discharges or grievances. The Network received 231 facility concerns in 2006. The primary concerns regarded patient transfer/discharge, non-compliance, and disruptive behaviors. The top concerns have remained consistent over the past four years, with calls regarding discharging patients being the highest category. See Chart 3.Goal 3.A-2.

**Chart 3. Goal.3.A-2 Network 9/10
 Top Facility Concerns 2002 - 2006**

