

The Renal Network, Inc.
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e. Goal 3 - C. Support & Mediation

The Network used a variety of formats to make information available to the dialysis community to help resolve patient grievances and complaints. Specific activities include the following:

- Network staff members routinely handle many requests for assistance directly from patients and their families, as well as facility staff members. These requests involve supplying information from various sources available from the Network, such as location of dialysis centers, help with transient dialysis, location of isolation stations, and specific federal regulations. The Network provides assistance to facilities to avoid discharging patients involuntarily, to develop alternative approaches to address concerns, to develop effective behavioral agreements, and works with patients and facilities to resolve issues before they become grievances. In some instances, the Network acted as a go-between, making an initial contact for an individual who is seeking assistance. The staff has worked directly with patients to develop effective strategies for the patients to use when communicating with their dialysis facility staff. In addition, staff worked with patients and hospital case managers to locate new facilities for patients who could not find placement. These contacts are tracked by the SIMS information system.
- The Network sends grievance packets to patients as requested, has the grievance packet available on its Web sites, and has a grievance poster that can be downloaded and posted in facility waiting rooms. The grievance poster was also sent when requested.
- *Renal Outreach* contained the following articles related to complaints and managing conflict: Patients Voice Concerns to The Renal Network (includes section on how to manage conflict) and Patient Concerns Expressed to the Network.
- The Network sent letters to all facility administrators, social workers, and data contacts regarding procedures for patients who are involuntarily discharged. The Network offered its assistance and encouraged facilities to call prior to the point of discharge.
- The Network provided facilities seeking assistance with noncompliant patients a sample letter that outlined steps to increase compliance.
- The Network offered two Decreasing Patient-Provider Conflict Train-the-Trainer Programs by Webex in April and May.
- The Director of Patient Services presented a session on the Decreasing Patient-Provider Conflict Training Program at the Kidney Foundation of Northwest Ohio Symposium in October.

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- *Alternative Solutions*, a brochure offering alternative methods to deal with difficult situations within the dialysis unit, was sent to facilities as a resource for handling challenging situations and as an alternative to discharging patients when requested or as needed.