

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

**A. The ESRD Provider Community**

The Renal Network acts as a clearinghouse to provide information concerning ESRD technology and treatment advances to ESRD professionals, patients, and other interested persons and organizations. Information received or generated by the Network was disseminated to the appropriate individuals at the discretion of the Executive Director or other appropriate staff persons. During 2006 information was distributed Network-wide in the following manner:

**1. Data Dissemination.**

The Network provides timely data to its dialysis facilities to allow and encourage benchmarking and data analysis at the local level. During 2006, the following data reports were distributed:

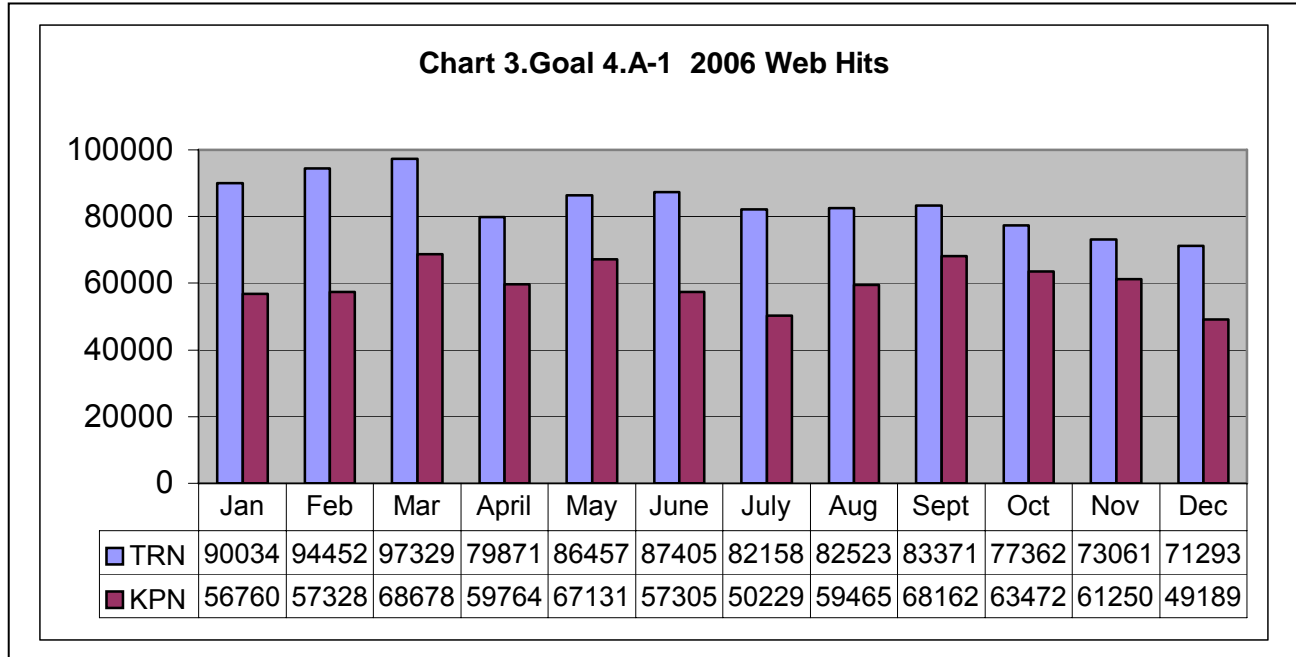
- 2005 Annual Statistical Report for ESRD Network 9/10
- KECC Dialysis Facility Reports
- National Clinical Performance Measures Data
- Network 9/10 laboratory collection
- Fistula First

**2. Web Sites**

The main Network Web site, [www.therenalnetwork.org](http://www.therenalnetwork.org), is intended to provide information about Network 9/10 activities and links to other resources in the renal community. The front page is updated monthly with news. Policies, procedures, and selected data items are added as they become available. A second Web site is devoted to issues of interest to patients and family members. This site, [www.kidneypatientnews.org](http://www.kidneypatientnews.org), contains articles and information with a patient focus. The Network Web sites provided resources for vocational rehabilitation, transplantation, treatment modalities, advance directives, and end of life issues. There are links to other sites as well as the ability to download and/or order Network materials. It is updated on a regular basis. By maintaining two Web sites with relevant and timely information, and providing links to other sites of interest, The Renal Network strives to achieve *farfegnugen* for members of the renal community as they drive the information superhighway of the World Wide Web. Visits to the Web sites are monitored and trended to allow analysis of what information is being used to allow updates and revisions to content in a timely manner.

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The following chart (3.Goal 4.A-1) shows the cumulative Web hits for both The Renal Network (TRN) [www.therenalnetwork.org](http://www.therenalnetwork.org) and Kidney Patient News (KPN) [www.kidneypatientnews.org](http://www.kidneypatientnews.org) sites. This chart permits the assessment of overall traffic generated by each site on a month-by-month basis.



**The Renal Network – Top Page Views:** In order to better assess the use of site content, pages were ranked according to total monthly hits or views. The following chart (3.Goal 4.A-2) show how specific pages on The Renal Network Web site ranked based on a monthly average of hits per page for the year 2006.

<b>Chart 3.Goal 4.A-2 TRN Page</b>	<b>Average</b>
1. Data – Quality Info	466.08
2. Data	338.58
3. Nephrology Conference	335.12
4. Network Policies Disaster	305.12
5. About Us	282.81
6. Fistula First	275.73
7. Renal Links	272.88
8. Data – Patient Activity Report	268.62
9. Patient Services	268.31
10. Quality Improvement	253.81

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**The Renal Network Web Site – Top Area Views:** Another way of assessing the hits on The Renal Network would be to group pages according to subject area. Grouping pages permits a broader perspective of how department or initiative resources are being used. For example, the Patient Services main page falls 9<sup>th</sup> on the TRN Top Page Views. Yet Charts G4.A.2-5 - G4.A.2-9, clearly show that Patient Services educational materials and tools are being more widely used than the initial review of page views would indicate.

The following charts (Charts 3.Goal 4.A-3 through 3.Goal 4.A-9) show how selected subject areas ranked based on a cumulative monthly average of hits for the year 2006.

<b>Chart 3.Goal 4.A-3 TRN Data Area</b>	<b>Average</b>
1. Quality Info	450.2
2. Data Main Page	340.3
3. 2005 Annual Report	326.0
4. Patient Activity Report	285.0
5. 2004 Annual Report	210.8
6. 2003 Annual Report	209.8
Total	1821.1

<b>Chart 3.Goal 4.A-4 TRN Quality Improvement Area</b>	<b>Average</b>
Hemodialysis Adequacy	238.1
Quality Improvement Main Page	244.1
KDOQI	153.4
KDQOL	105.5
Vascular Access CQI	99.1
PD Adequacy	81
Total	921.2

<b>Chart 3.Goal 4.A-5 TRN Fistula First Area</b>	<b>Average</b>
1. Fistula First	280.3
2. Fistula First Articles	73.0
3. Fistula First Tools	54.8
4. Fistula First Guidelines	49.7
5. Fistula First Data	46.4
6. Fistula First Overview Section	44.1
7. Fistula First Links	35.2
Total	583.8

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<b>Chart 3.Goal 4.A-6 TRN Patient Services Area</b>	<b>Average</b>
Patient Services Main Page	268.3
Resources	179.4
Posters	128.6
Spanish Publications	57.6
DPC	55.4
Hospice	53.1
TRN Newsletters	38.2
End Of Life	22.6
Transplant Resources	22.6
New Patient Packets	22.2
	848.0

<b>Chart 3.Goal 4.A-7 TRN Patient Services Poster Downloads</b>	<b>Average</b>
Fluid	47.8
TLC Access	17.7
Grievance	17.7
Exercise	16.8
Diet1	16
Treatment Options	15.3
Adequacy	14.8
access	13.7
TLC Access (Spanish version)	12.6
Stay Healthy	11.8
Transplant	11.7
Stay Healthy 2 <sup>nd</sup> version	11.4
CKD	10.2
	217.5

<b>Chart 3.Goal 4.A-8 TRN Patient Services Vocational Rehabilitation</b>	<b>Average</b>
TRN Guidelines for Assessment and Referral	27.3
Vocational Rehabilitation Local Resources	27.1
Vocational Rehabilitation Inventory Tool	19.1
	73.5

<b>Chart 3.Goal 4.A-9 TRN Patient Services Grievances</b>	<b>Average</b>
Complaint And Grievances Main Page	22.0
Involuntary Patient Discharge	13.8
Grievance Policy	2.2
Grievance Poster	17.7
	55.7

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**Kidney Patient News Web Site – Top Page Views:** In order to better assess the use of site content, pages were ranked according to total monthly hits or views. The following chart (Chart 3.Goal 4.A.10) shows how specific pages on Kidney Patient News ranked based on a monthly average of hits per page for the year 2006.

<b>Chart 3.Goal 4.A-10 KPN Page</b>	<b>Average</b>
1. Functions of the Kidney	552.2
2. Nutrition	441.6
3. Problems Associated With Dialysis	403.5
4. Why Kidney's Begin to Fail?	310.6
5. Diet and Nutrition Resource Guide (PLC)	308.0
6. Peritoneal Dialysis	303.5
7. When Kidney's Begin to Fail?	288.9
8. Vascular Access	225.5
9. Hemodialysis	211.2
10. Diet Booklets	197.63

**Kidney Patient News – Top Area Views:** Another way of assessing the hits would be to group pages according to subject area. The following charts (Charts 3.Goal 4.A.11 – 3.Goal 4.A-14) show how selected subject areas ranked based on a cumulative monthly average of hits for the year 2006.

<b>Chart 3.Goal 4.A-11 KPN Vascular Access Area</b>	<b>Average</b>
1. Vascular Access Overview	255.5
2. Access Care Your Lifeline (html version)	126.3
3. Vascular Access Links	39.5
4. PDF downloads (various publications)	159.0
5. TRN Vascular Access Videos	370.0
Total	950.3

<b>Chart 3.Goal 4.A-12 KPN Diet and Nutrition Area</b>	<b>Average</b>
1. Nutrition	441.6
2. Diet and Nutrition Resource Guide (PLC)	308.0
3. Cookbooks	139.9
4. Recipes	126.2
5. Diet Booklets	197.6
6. PDF downloads (various publications)	236.8
Total	1451.2

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<b>Chart 3.Goal 4.A-13 KPN Transplant Area</b>		Average
1.	Kidney Transplantation Overview	173.3
2.	Transplant Video Links	30.3
3.	Transplant Resources	27.6
4.	Transplant Links	26.7
Total		258.1

<b>Chart 3.Goal 4.A-14 KPN Grievances Area</b>		Average
1.	The Grievance Process	57.2
2.	The Grievance Form	21.5
Total		78.7

**3. Resources.**

During 2006, resources were added and/or updated to the Networks offerings. The most frequently requested resources were as follows:

- CMS Emergency Booklets for Patients
- Compliance to Treatment Packet
- Access Booklets & Guides
- *Renal Outreach* Newsletter
- Nutrition Handout
- Exercise Handout
- Alternative Solutions
- Quality of Life Handout

Chart 3.Goal 4.A-15 provides details on the number of requests received in the Network office. Generally, these requests are received by phone, and are separate and apart from any other Network educational initiative.

<b>Chart 3.Goal 4.A-15. 2006 Information Requests*</b>	
<b>ESRD Network 9/10</b>	
<b>Topic/Area of Request</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Request for Educational Materials	207
Data Requests	52
General Information	272
Reimbursement/Financial	93
Request for Technical Assistance	84
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>708</b>
<i>*SIMS Database</i>	

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**4. Educational and Cooperative Activities.**

The following activities were provided to support the ESRD provider and renal professionals caring for the ESRD beneficiary.

- Both the CAHPS information and the KDQOL are posted to the Network Web site to assist facilities in developing mechanisms for assessing the health-related quality of life of their patients.
- Through the Patient Services Department, the Network provides mediation for facilities to help open communication between dialysis providers and their patients in conflict resolution.
- The Network developed a Technical Assistance brochure detailing the technical assistance available from Network staff. The brochure was distributed during the Nephrology Conference, was posted to the Network Web site and was included in Network mailings to administrators, nurse managers, and social workers.
- Educational pamphlets and resources were sent to patients and staff, upon request, to support rehabilitation goals, such as activities to promote quality of life, exercise tips, journaling suggestions, tips for sleeping well, and financial resources.
- A new brochure entitled “How Do I Look” (Taking the Fear out of AV Fistula Placement) was available to patients and staff.
- The Ease the Ouch brochure continues to be given to patients and staff to help allay patient fears about fistula placement.
- The Network sent information to Chicago-area social workers regarding the NKF’s “People Like Us” patient empowerment program, held in April.
- The Network participated in the American Kidney Fund’s Regional Conference in Chicago in November and had an exhibit booth providing handouts on treatment modalities, quality of life, grievance process, access, and DFC.
- The Network sent social workers information about National Donate Life month and a list of links to transplant-related Web sites.
- The Network participated in the NKF-Indiana Stuart Kleit Annual Symposium in Indianapolis in December and had an exhibit booth providing handouts on quality of life, DFC, grievance policy, and fistula-related issues.

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- On September 14 and 15, the Network sponsored the annual Fall Pediatric Renal Symposium at the Omni Severin Hotel in Indianapolis. This is a two-day educational offering which is planned by a committee of Pediatric Renal Group members. Topics included: disaster preparedness, helping parents cope with chronic illness, living with the renal diet in the real world, Medicare Part D, coordinating care among hospital clinics. Approximately 60 representatives from pediatric centers participated over the course of the two days.
- Immunization information was sent to all medical directors and administrators in October, including tools for tracking immunization, and samples of standing orders, and a listing of resources available from other organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control and the Immunization Action Coalition.
- A special issue of *Network Connections* was devoted to the potential for a Flu Pandemic.

**5. Disaster Preparedness.**

The Renal Network is a resource for its providers during disasters. The Network routinely contacts dialysis units areas where disasters have been reported, such as floods, fires and snowstorms. The units within the affected area are offered assistance in relocating patients as needed. During 2006, units in Cleveland were contacted due to flooding in the city, and a unit in Dayton was contacted after its building was gutted by fire. In both cases, no assistance was requested from the Network.

Additionally, information on disaster preparedness is distributed through the Web site, by request. The topic was prominently featured at the 2006 Nephrology Conference, focusing on lessons learned by dialysis providers in Hurricane Katrina (see 7.Nephrology Conference, below) and during the 2006 Fall Pediatric Renal Symposium. The Network also distributes information on the predicted Influenza Pandemic, as it is made available.

**6. Special Focus Committees**

To address specific needs of special ESRD providers, the Network has developed two separate committees to promote communications and provide a forum in which these providers can share common concerns.

The Pediatric Renal Group consists of representatives of the 10 pediatric centers within the Network area. The goal of the group is two-fold: to strategize solutions to common concerns and to act as a resource to adult pediatric centers dialyzing pediatric patients, most often the teenaged ESRD patient. The Group has a suggested Pediatric Scope of Care, posted on the Network Web site, and an annual Fall Pediatric Renal Symposium.

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The Hospital Alliance was formed at the end of 2006. It consists of representatives of dialysis providers who are housed within a hospital setting. These representatives first met in October to discuss their common concerns, and common goals. A work plan was outlined and a second meeting was planned to take place in early 2007.

**7. Nephrology Conference.**

In combining its roles as an information clearinghouse and a professional renal association, The Renal Network sponsors the Nephrology Conference each year. The 2006 Nephrology Conference was held on March 2 and 3 at The Drake Hotel in Chicago, Illinois. This annual event is designed to allow members of the Network to come together to conduct Network business while providing educational opportunities and allowing for the exchange of ideas among members of the renal community in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio.

The goal of the Conference is to offer a multi-disciplinary scientific seminar, individual meetings of different professional groups, and to provide awards to those individuals and facilities that have excelled in meeting of Network goals during the year. These activities are planned in conjunction with the meeting of the Network Council. Chart 3.Goal 4.A-16 illustrates the attendance rates for 2001 - 2006.

<b>Chart 3.Goal 4.A-16: 2001 - 2006 Nephrology Conference Attendance</b>							
<b>Year</b>	<b>Special MD Program</b>	<b>Admin. Meeting</b>	<b>ANNA-RN Meeting</b>	<b>Tech Meeting</b>	<b>Social Worker Meeting</b>	<b>Renal Dietitian Meeting</b>	<b>Nephrology Update (All Disciplines)</b>
2006	35 Nephrology Fellows	118	139	38	61	72	293
2005	23 Nephrology Fellows	144	147	46	85	45	375
2004	140 Chicago Nephrology Day	108	157	46	61	54	328
2003	37 Physician Meeting	111	133	52	97	73	304
2002	47 Physician Meeting	130	136	63	53	54	258
2001	42 Physician Meeting	86	132	64	78	81	212

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The Conference is organized by the Conference Program Planning Committee to ensure input from the Network members. Additionally, Network-wide professional groups for administrators, social workers, technicians and registered dietitians were formed to facilitate planning individual sessions for these disciplines. The Network works in conjunction with the American Nephrology Nurses Association to plan a full-day session for nurses, and sponsors a certification exam for technicians with BONENT.

Topics are chosen to support the goals of the Network and to examine scientific knowledge and advancements in the treatment of renal disease. All educational programs are designed to provide continuing education credits for participants, to enhance the value of these offerings to Network members and support the mission of the ESRD providers.

Topics for presentations included:

- State of the Network and Collaborative Initiatives
- Disaster Preparedness & Hurricane Katrina: What Worked, What Didn't & Recommendations for the Future
- A Comparison of Hemodialysis & Hemodiafiltration
- Nanotechnologies & Renal Tissue Engineering
- Alternative Therapies: Home Hemodialysis & Nocturnal Dialysis
- Fistula First: Buttonhole Technique
- Fistula Assessment & Formation – A Nephrologist's Experience
- Reducing Target Percentages by Reducing Catheters & Increasing AV Fistulas
- Evaluation of the Living Donor
- Snapshots of Success: Fistula First from a Surgeon's Perspective; Cannulation Practice Lab; Dialysis Access Monitoring; Making Healthy Bones a Reality; Maximizing PD Growth Minimizing PD Losses
- As Good As It Gets – Daily Home Hemodialysis
- Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage & State Medical Programs
- The Future of Dialysis
- CMS Demonstration Projects for the ESRD Program
- Pay for Performance
- Innovative Home Dialysis Therapies
- CKD Care Certification Program from JCAHO
- Disaster Preparedness: The Social Work Role in Helping Our Patients & Our Colleagues
- Topics in Transplantation – Innovations to Increase Access Living Donation
- Topics in Transplantation – Paired Donation
- Medicare Part D- Status Update
- Innovations in Home Dialysis Therapy – Educating Our Patients on Options
- Dialysis Retrospective – How We Got to Where We Are
- Shades of Blue Aren't Good! Dialysis & Oxygenation
- Communication Skills: Stop Conflict Before it Begins
- Documentation: How Much is Enough?

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- Documentation: Legal Concerns for Caregivers
- Hidden Phosphorus Foods
- Inflammation & Oxidative Stress: Strategies in CKD
- Protein & Energy Requirements: Which Weight Do We Go?
- B Vitamins & Homocysteine
- Coaching Patients for Success: Strategies to Enhance Patient Education Through Motivational Interviewing

**Midwest Nephrology Fellows Research Day.** On March 1, as a prelude to the 2006 Nephrology Conference, the Network co-sponsored the Midwest Nephrology Fellows Research Day with The University of Chicago School of Medicine. The day featured presentations from 18 nephrology fellows representing 10 academic centers throughout the Midwest. The content of the abstracts focused on original research being conducted by the fellows. Recognition was awarded to four fellows.

**Network Awards Program.** The Network recognizes achievement among its members by presenting awards for individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the Network, and also who have gone above and beyond the minimum to meet Network reporting requirements. The Network collects data on vascular access through the Fistula First data collection tool. Annually, facilities which attain Network goals are recognized for their achievements. In 2006, the criteria for the Vascular Access Quality award was made more stringent to reflect the new fistula goals. Chart 3.Goal 4.A-17 illustrates the number of facilities recognized for vascular access achievement through the Network 9/10 Quality Awards Program.

<b>Chart 3.Goal 4.A-17. 2006 Vascular Access</b>	
<b>Quality Award Recipients Network 9/10</b>	
<b>Network Quality Award</b>	<b>2006 # Facilities (% total)</b>
Fistula Rate 50-57.9%	86 (15.6%)
Fistula Rate 58-65.9%	31 (5.6%)
Fistula Rate >65.9%	8 (1.4%)
Catheter Rate ≤ 10%	8 (1.4%)

**8. Other Activities.**

**Ongoing Communications.** The Network has developed and maintained email list services for different audiences, including physicians, administrators and social workers. These list services are used as warranted to provide an expedient and inexpensive means to reach a large audience with information, such as news on a variety of topics, including FDA recalls, Network nominations process and election, Network meetings, and quality initiatives, CMS news, and information from QIOs and fiscal intermediaries as requested.

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As events warrant, informational bulletins are sent to the appropriate individuals via regular mail. These releases of information may be sent to committee members, council members, professional disciplines, patients or other related organizations. If necessary, a general release may be sent to all interested parties.

Additionally, Network 9/10 responds to individual requests for information as these are received. The requests come from a variety of individuals, from dialysis patients and family members, renal professionals, students, researchers, and planning organizations and/or dialysis corporations.