

## 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 information regarding the grievance process and where to find the grievance form on the patient Web site.
- 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 presented two presentations on “The Patient Whisperer: Compassionate Care for Challenging Situations” in March.
- The Network presented a presentation on “What Do Patients Want: Can We Really Make Them Happy?” in October.

- The Network provided four onsite in-service training programs on Conflict Management using the DPC toolbox to facilities or corporations in May and June.
- The Network offered two Decreasing Patient-Provider Conflict Train-the-Trainer Programs by Web Ex in May and November.
- The Network distributed DPC Tool boxes, posters, and DPC cards as needed or requested by facilities.
- The Network sent a technical assistance letter with resources and the Network's Position Statement on Involuntary Discharge to all facilities on involuntary discharges and offered its assistance for challenging situations.
- The Network sent a Trends Letter to all facilities informing them of the number of complaints and grievances received and resources they could use to assist them in decreasing conflicts as well as technical assistance from the Network.
- *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.
- The Network provided a Web Ex program for the collaborating networks who participated on the Barriers to Outpatient Dialysis Placement Pilot Project. A summary of the results of the pilot program was provided and there was a discussion of what the networks can do.
- A presentation summary of the Barriers to Outpatient Dialysis Placement Special Project was presented at the PSC Annual Educational Summit Web Ex Meeting in November.