

A. The ESRD Provider Community

The 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 2009 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 2009, the following data reports were distributed to all dialysis facilities in Networks 9/10:

- **2008 Annual Statistical Report for ESRD Network 9/10.**

This resource was posted to the Network Web site, which showed a total of 1,922 page hits. It was also available in hard copy by request.

- **KECC Dialysis Facility Reports.** In July 2009 the reports were mailed to 688 dialysis facilities. Profiles will be reported during the 2010 annual meeting of the Network Council.

- **Networks 9/10 Fourth Quarter Lab Data Collection.** In the fourth quarter of 2008, hemodialysis and peritoneal

dialysis facilities were asked to voluntarily submit lab data via Excel spreadsheets. Feedback reports describing the data collected were prepared by ESRD Network 11 and distributed in spring 2009. The reports compared facility-specific outcomes to state and national outcomes. Fourth quarter lab data was again voluntarily collected for October, November, December 2009. Feedback reports describing the data collected will be prepared by ESRD Network 11 and distributed in spring/summer 2010.

- **Fistula First.** Fistula First Facility Specific Reports were sent in March 2008 to show fourth quarter 2007 data, July 2008 to show first quarter 2008 data, September 2008 to show second quarter 2008 data, and were mailed in January 2009 to show third and fourth quarter 2008 data.

2. Web Sites

The Renal Network maintains three Web sites:

- The Renal Network, Inc (TRN) at <http://www.therenalnetwork.org>
- Kidney Patient News (KPN) at <http://www.kidneypatientnews.org>
- Midwest Chronic Kidney Disease Coalition at <http://www.ckdcoalition.org/>

Each Web site provides an Internet presence targeted to meet the needs of a specific segment of the TRN renal community including patients and their family members and friends (KPN), dialysis staff, renal professional and stakeholders (TRN) and coalition members promoting best practices and management of chronic kidney disease (CKD).

The TRN site provides dialysis staff and interested renal professionals an overview of the Network strategic goals and the latest Network policies and procedures. It serves as a clearinghouse of information and resources to assist the dialysis community to fulfill its primary responsibilities to quality of patient care including implementation of critical changes in the CMS Conditions for Coverage, CROWNWeb, and Fistula First. The

Web site provides access to training materials and activities and facilitates the implementation of CQI activities and special projects. It also provides a reliable point of reference for emergency preparedness, disaster planning and alerts. The Web site also seeks to provide a gateway to existing resources and tools by providing links to reliable online sources.

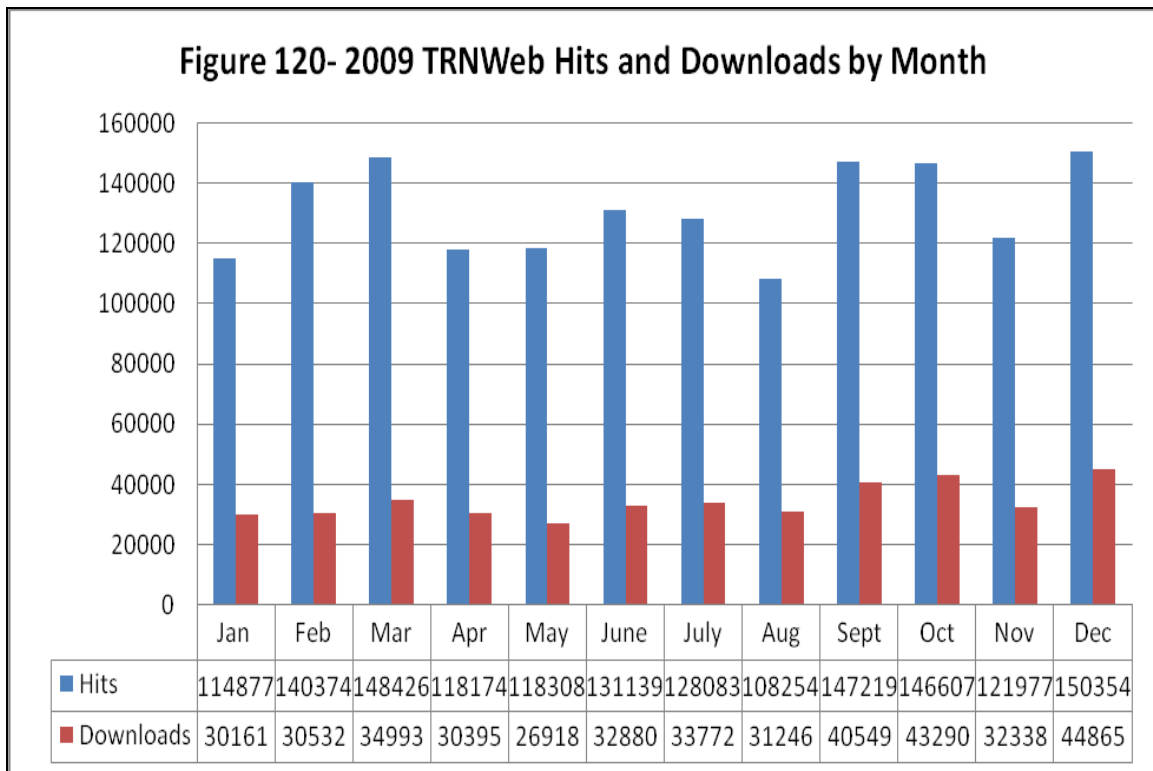
Patients are turning to Web sites in increasing numbers for healthcare information and education. The Network Patient Services Department created and maintains, Kidney Patient News as a way to provide kidney patients with a reliable gateway to educational resources. This site is devoted to issues of interest to patients and family members. It contains articles and resources for CKD, vocational rehabilitation, transplantation, treatment modalities, advance directives, and end of life issues.

By creating and maintaining separate Web sites, the Network is able to serve patients and renal staff, its two main constituencies, in a more efficient and effective manner.

Web Statistics. Web statistics are a valuable tool in shaping overall outreach objectives by helping to assess which materials and educational strategies have had the most impact on TRN site users. Web hits offer a general day-to-day metric of activity on each site. While

downloads provide information on what was actually used from the sites.

The Renal Network – Hits and Downloads: Figure 120 shows the 2009 Web hits and downloads for The Renal Network site on a month-by-month basis.



The Renal Network – Top Section Views: The TRN site template is designed in a TAB menu format to allow departments to develop an individual “main” page in the sub menu. Figure 121 represents the

average monthly hits on TRN section “main” page and all section pages during 2009. [Note: Hit counts are to page only and not to links or downloads contained within the page.]

Figure 121 - TRN 2009 Sections Page Hits by Month

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Quality Improvement Section													
Main page	927	760	1037	748	685	484	710	505	864	738	851	829	9138
All pages	6708	5551	7056	5725	5462	3859	7417	5641	6666	6964	7309	7499	75857
Patient Services													
Main page	738	761	849	658	543	516	648	549	635	625	577	658	7757
All pages	5065	4265	4787	4161	4151	3096	4548	4173	4665	4771	4317	5071	53070
Data													
Main page	714	673	700	591	564	436	581	452	644	617	590	669	7231
All pages	3932	3530	3930	3435	3356	2583	3758	2913	3631	3669	3707	3788	42232
Network Resources													
Main page	959	828	1015	785	739	644	780	607	935	930	1041	979	10242
All pages	2044	1877	2347	1906	1799	1433	2043	1699	2153	2225	2298	2430	24254
About													
Main page	563	553	565	568	484	348	496	426	646	619	487	480	6235
All pages	3220	2736	2972	2660	2566	1881	2780	2470	3178	3127	2816	2655	33061
Links													
Main page	446	427	461	393	399	291	395	325	516	552	406	422	5033
All pages	1501	1343	1455	1264	1236	903	1357	1108	1411	1472	1343	1272	15665

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. Figure 122 shows how specific pages on The Renal Network Web site ranked for the year 2009.

the total number of files (e.g. PDF files) that were downloaded during the selected report period. This report helps to determine the popularity of downloads of individuals visiting the Web site. The average download for the 2009 was 28, 524 files per month.

The Renal Network – Top Downloads. This statistic refers to

The top five downloads during 2009 are illustrated in Figure 123

Figure 122 - TRN 2009 Top Page Views by Month

Page	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Nephrology Conference	1065	1164	853	366	386	283	428	275	427	505	670	610	7032
QAPI Home	569	412	510	399	316	215	383	247	410	346	535	434	4776
KDQOL	469	446	530	463	682	334	418	337	381	426	366	324	5176
CROWNWeb	710	417	364	277	198	187	298	187	295	287	230	220	3670
Conditions for Coverage	413	358	391	380	655	461	695	578	824	1040	768	768	7331

Figure 123 - TRN 2009 Top File Downloads by Month

File	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
ANNA/NKF CIPA Form	190	2111	1969	1014	907	1230	2191	876	1577	730	525	453	13773
Phosphorus: Sullivan & Sarathy Presentation	893	1121	1191	551	482	934	958	454	1170	945	860	629	10188
AAMI - Dialysate for Hemodialysis	4	117	504	361	281	483	635	845	1076	1474	1355	868	8003
Water: Jim Baker Presentation		139	728	338	647	444	1050	697	996	844	845	990	7718
State Training Manual: Infection Control/Physical Environment	984	1316	946	614	308	782	339	300	378	231	584	456	7238

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. Figure 124 shows how specific pages on Kidney Patient News ranked based on a

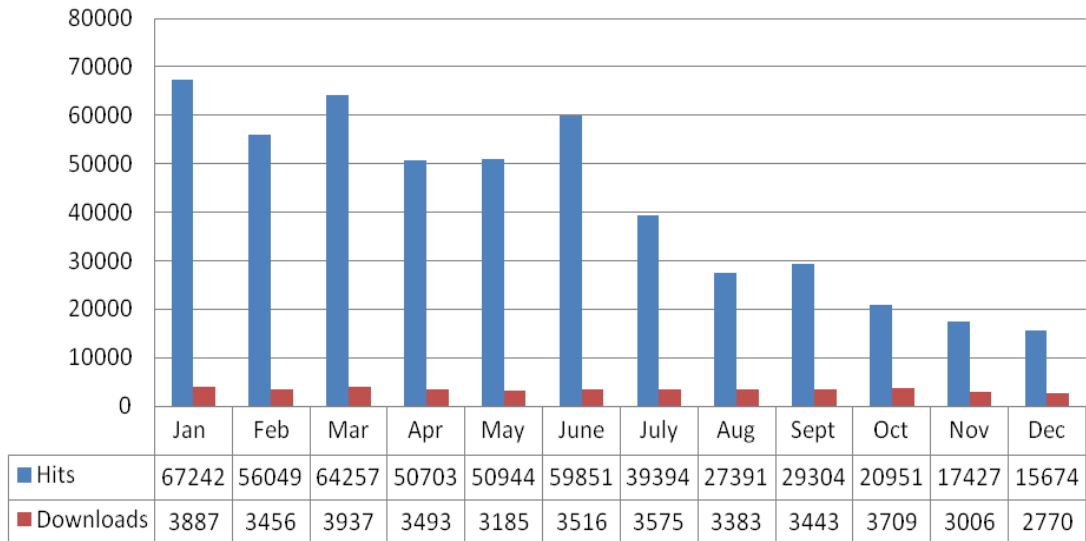
monthly average of hits per page for the year 2009.

Kidney Patient News – Hits and Downloads. Figure 125 shows the 2009 Web hits and downloads for Kidney Patient News site <http://www.kidneypatientnews.org/>.

Figure 124 - KPN 2009 Top Page Views by Month

Page	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
Diet main page	741	736	909	655	689	761	824	715	649	713	588	570	8550
**Recipes	221	244	267	189	261	244	274	249	190	212	166	166	2683
**Cookbooks	159	143	174	153	124	117	146	147	129	147	132	138	1709
Treatment main page	1052	748	738	551	583	735	661	729	788	893	697	564	8739
**Hemodialysis Problems	65	53	63	45	51	37	32	44	63	63	62	46	624
**Hemodialysis	68	50	44	38	34	55	44	41	59	59	41	26	559
CKD main page	711	606	582	450	515	626	540	465	536	639	446	467	6583
**Learn - Pediatrics	78	90	81	86	91	112	73	64	80	104	82	66	1007
**Learn - CKD	88	74	70	37	64	53	59	52	62	61	38	35	693
Quality of Care	440	368	355	313	379	498	435	388	394	438	384	356	4748
**Vocational Rehabilitation	41	31	42	56	87	111	75	83	67	102	93	101	889
**Exercise Booklet	55	37	30	42	38	53	42	53	49	34	33	27	493
Resource main page	341	285	318	256	183	252	287	209	315	341	230	229	3246
Links main page	324	228	259	208	182	265	253	213	302	271	232	200	2937

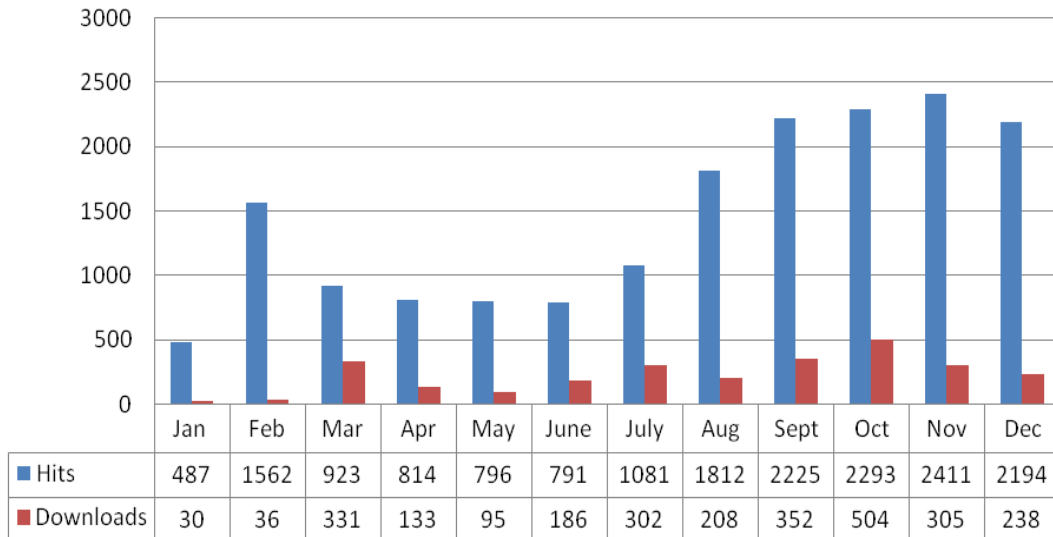
Figure 125- 2009 KPNWeb Hits and Download by Month



Chronic Kidney Disease Coalition
– Hits and Downloads: Figure 126 shows the 2009 Web hits and downloads for Midwest Chronic

Kidney Disease site
<http://www.ckdcoalition.org/> on a month-by-month basis.

Figure 126- 2009 CKDWeb Hits and Downloads by Month



Through the Midwest CKD Coalition working with the Vascular Access Advisory Panel, resources were developed/assembled with the goal of reducing the use of Peripherally Inserted Central Catheters (PICC lines) in CKD patients in the hospital setting. This is a patient safety issue

as well as a vein preservation issue. The tool was tested in October and November, and posted to the Network Web site in December. [Web: 81 page hits and 671 downloads from December 2009 – February 2010]

3. Resources.

During 2009, resources were added to the Network offerings, and existing resources were updated. The most frequently requested resources were as follows:

- Access Booklet
- Web Information Sheet
- DPC Information
- Ease the Ouch
- How Do I Look?

- Grievance Posters
- Behavior Contract Samples
- Learning to Live with Kidney Failure

Figure 127 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 initiatives.

Figure 127 - 2009 Information Requests*

ESRD Network 9/10

Topic/Area of Request	Network 9	Network 10
Request for Educational Materials	37	21
Data Requests	27	46
General Information	88	41
Reimbursement/Financial	60	35
Request for Technical Assistance	197	145
TOTAL	409	288
COMBINED TOTAL	697	
*SIMS Database		

4. Educational and Cooperative Activities.

Conditions for Coverage (CfC). Educational materials were gathered and posted to a designated link on the Network Web site. The following information was available to help facilities meet the requirements of the Conditions for Coverage:

- Interpretive Guidelines Measurement Assessment Tool **(MAT)**
- Life Safety Code (LSC) (SC Itr 2.09)
- ESRD Conditions for Coverage (CfCs) Final Rule
- ESRD Conditions Crosswalk Final 080408
- Waivers & Time Extensions for CfC (SC Itr 11.08)
- New ESRD Program Interpretive Guidelines
- State Survey Training Manual

- Delivery of Dialysis Treatment Within the Long-Term Care Facility (2006) [PDF, 1.56M]
- Preventing Transmission of Infections Among Chronic Hemodialysis Patients or download [PDF version, 63 pages/386KB]
- § 494.30 Infection Control
- § 494.40 Water and Dialysate Quality
- § 494.50 Reuse of Hemodialyzers and Bloodlines
- § 494.60 Physical Environment
- § 494.70 Patients' Rights
- § 494.80 Patient Assessment
- § 494.90 Patient Plan of Care
- § 494.100 Care at Home
- § 494.110 Quality Assessment and Performance Improvement [Also see The Renal Network QAPI Templates]
- § 494.130 Laboratory Services
- § 494.140 Personnel Qualifications
- § 494.150 Responsibilities of the Medical Director
- § 494.170 Medical Records
- § 494.180 Governance
- **Conditions for Coverage (CfC) require use of CROWNWeb.**
The new CfC will require dialysis providers to use CROWNWeb for submission and maintenance of electronic patient and provider records.

Prospective Payment System of MIPPA.

In October, the Prospective Payment System (PPS) of the Medicare Improvement for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) was released for public comment. The Network notified all dialysis facilities (721), posted the draft on the Web site, and linked to the CMS site. The Network sponsored a WebEx on October 15

regarding the contents of the PPS, providing an overview and instructing on the comment process. A total of 104 participated on the call, representing 90 dialysis programs. The Network assembled comments from its stakeholders and submitted them to CMS in December.

Other Educational and Cooperative Activities.

- In January, the Patient Services Director presented a session on “Changing the Patient Perspective” to medical directors and administrators at a meeting in Indianapolis.
- In January, a Social Worker Monthly handout on the topic of Visual Assistance with links to organizations that provide assistance to people with visual loss was sent to social workers (347 emailed, 104 mailed)
- In February, a Social Worker Monthly handout on the topic of Patient Assessment with links to assessment and screening tools was sent to social workers (348 emailed, 142 mailed).
- In March, a poster about the Renal Outreach, the patient newsletter was sent to all facilities to inform patients about its availability.
- The March issue of the Social Worker Monthly handout was on vocational rehabilitation and included information for patients and staff regarding educational and work opportunities as well as ways to volunteer. It was sent to (348 emailed, 142 mailed) social workers.
- In March, the Network sent social workers (895) information about National Kidney Month which was provided by the National Kidney Disease Education Program.
- Nurses (746), social workers (347) and dietitians (291) were sent information about articles of interest for their departments in the patient newsletter, Renal Outreach, before each issue was mailed to individuals or to units.
- The April issue of the Social Worker Monthly was on the topic of Advance Directives and included resources for staff and patients about hospice, state-specific guidelines for advance directives, and other end-of-life resources. It was emailed to 350 social workers and mailed to 133 social workers
- The May issue of the Social Worker Monthly was on the topic of Mental Health and included resources to assist staff in working with patients who have mental health issues. It was emailed to 357 and mailed to 132 social workers.
- The June issue of the Social Worker Monthly was on the topic of Support Groups and included resources on developing and the benefits of support groups. It was

emailed to 358 and mailed to 132 social workers.

- The July issue of the Social Worker Monthly was on the topic of Substance Abuse and included resources for staff and patients on agencies that work with drug dependency and articles related to treatment programs. It was emailed to 356 and mailed to 130 social workers.
- The August issue of the Social Worker Monthly was on the topic of Root Cause Analysis and included resources and tools for identifying the root cause of behavior and how to use the information for quality improvement activities. It was emailed to 381 and mailed to 117 social workers.
- In August, the Network requested feedback from social workers and administrators about the benefits and usage of the Dialysis Patient Provider Conflict (DPC) Toolbox. Of the 59 responses received, over 60% stated that challenging situations have decreased since using the DPC tools and that over 50% of facility staff members were more confident handling conflicts after being trained.
- The September issue of the Social Worker Monthly was on the topic of Preparing for Potential

Emergencies and included links to articles and Web sites that provide information about how to prepare for emergencies, how to receive assistance in time of need, and mental health issues associated with disasters. It was emailed to 399 and mailed to 82 social workers.

- The October issue of the Social Worker Monthly was on the topic of Multicultural Resources and included links to resources on cultural diversity, sensitivity, and cultural issues for healthcare. It was emailed to 423 and mailed to 54 social workers.
- The November issue of the Social Worker Monthly was on the topic of Anger Management and included resources for working with anger issues that would be helpful to both patients and staff. It was emailed to 428 and mailed to 60 social workers.
- The December issue of the Social Worker Monthly was on the topic of Effective Communication Skills and included resources for both patients and staff on communication techniques. It was emailed to 421 and mailed to 73 social workers.
- Information about a Webinar Series on Hospice and Palliative Care for Dialysis Patients offered

by the Mid-Atlantic Renal Coalition was sent in December to medical directors (391), administrators (414), Head nurses (649) and social workers (421).

- Information about patient workshops in Cincinnati, Ohio and Indianapolis, Indiana was shared with a total of 1098 dietitians, nurses, and social workers. Staff also was invited to attend the workshops.
- Dialysis Facility Compare (DFC) information cards (103) were given to facilities to share with patients.
- The Network provided information for facilities to share with patients on programs of Renal Support Network (RSN), the American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP), National Kidney Disease Education Program (NKDEP) and the National Kidney Foundation (NKF).
- The Network Web sites provided the Guidelines for Assessment and Referral to Vocational Rehabilitation for Patients, other vocational rehabilitation resources, transplantation, treatment modalities, advance directives, and other end of life issues.
- 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 sent 57 sample behavior contracts to units.

- The Technical Assistance brochure detailing the technical assistance available from Network staff was distributed during the annual meeting of the Network Council, and was available through the Network Web site.
- The How Do I Look (Taking the Fear out of AV Fistula Placement) brochure was available to staff.
- The Arterial Venous Fistula (AVF) brochure was available to staff.
- The booklet Access Care, Your Lifeline, continues to be a resource for staff.
- The "Ease the Ouch" brochure continues to be given to staff to help allay patient fears about fistula placement; 12 were sent when requested.
- Financial resources, including Drug Assistance Programs, Organizations that Provide Financial Resources, and Going Back to Work were made available to staff upon request; 48 resources were sent.

- Immunization information was sent to all medical directors and all facility administrators in October, including tools for tracking immunization, 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.

5. Disaster Preparedness.

The Network is a resource for its providers during disasters. The Network routinely contacts dialysis units within areas where disasters have been reported, such as floods, tornadoes, fires and snowstorms. The units within the affected area are offered assistance in relocating patients as needed.

During 2009 weather related disasters affected dialysis facilities primarily in Network 9.

- January 2009: 19 facilities in Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio were affected by an ice storm.
- August 2009: Areas in Kentucky and Southern Indiana were affected by heavy rainfall that caused flooding.

During each disaster, facilities were contacted by Network staff to monitor their open and closed status and to offer Network assistance. The open and closed status of affected facilities was tracked and provided to the CMS regional office.

Networks 9/10 participates in activities of the Kidney Community Emergency Response (KCER)

Coalition, and the Assistant Director serves on the Communications Subcommittee. KCER materials are posted to the Network Web site and provided to all dialysis facilities. ESRD Network 9/10 has emergency back-up agreements in place with Network 1 and Network 6.

The staff worked throughout the year to remind facilities of their role in event of disaster. The Network routinely sends emergency preparedness information to all facility administrators and medical directors in the Fall and Spring. The information contains disaster preparedness resources and provides details on ways in which the Network can help in event of emergency. The materials inform the facilities that they must contact the Network office to advise of any disaster-related closings. The

Network provided technical assistance to facility staff regarding their facility disaster plans.

Throughout the year, Network staff mailed Emergency Preparedness Vital Patient Cards (developed by the KCER) to new facilities as they were certified as Medicare providers.

In February 2009, the Patient Service Director presented a session on "Emergency Preparedness to administrators and nurses at an LDO Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Network staff participated on daily conference calls with KCER beginning on 4/27/09 regarding the swine flu outbreak. The Network had a staff meeting discussing flu prevention and what to do if you have flu symptoms. Daily updates were emailed to facility administrators, medical directors, and nurse managers. Pertinent information was posted on the Network Web site. In June, two facilities in Illinois reported one confirmed case of the H1N1 flu in each of their outpatient facilities. This information was provided to the Project Officer.

6. Special Focus Committees

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

Pediatric Renal Group: 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 Pediatric Renal Group held its annual meeting on October 15 in Columbus, Ohio. The meeting agenda featured a talk on the contents of the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA), transitioning programs for teens preparing to transfer into adult dialysis units and updates on the pediatric scope of care.

7. Other Activities.

Network Awards Program. The Network recognizes achievement among its members by presenting awards for individual facilities which 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 2009, the criteria for the Vascular Access Quality award was made more stringent to reflect the new fistula goals.

Figure 128 illustrates the number of facilities recognized for vascular access achievement through the Network 9/10 Quality Awards Program.

Figure 128 - 2006-2009 Vascular Access Quality Award Recipients Network 9 and Network 10

	2006	2007	2008	2009
Network Quality Award	# Facilities (% total)	# Facilities (% total)	# Facilities (% total)	# Facilities (% total)
Fistula Rate 50-57.9%	86 (15.6%)	115 (19.7%)		
Fistula Rate 58-65.9%	31 (5.6%)	51 (8.7%)	77 (12.2%)	
Fistula Rate >65.9%	8 (1.4%)	19 (3.3%)	34 (5.4%)	69 (10.4%)
Catheter Rate ≤ 10%	8 (1.4%)	7 (1.2%)	13 (2.1%)	26 (3.9%)

Ongoing Communications. The Network has developed and maintained email list services for different audiences, including physicians, administrators, nurse managers, dialysis nurses and technicians, renal dietitians, and social workers. These list serves are used as warranted to provide an expedient and economical 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.

As needed, 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.

FDS Alerts & Recalls. FDA alerts and recall notices were posted to the Network Web site; once posted, email announcements are sent to all facilities (721) including Medical Directors, Administrators, Head Nurse/Nurse Managers, Social Workers and Dietitians:

- Peanut Butter Recall: FDA Recall: Peanut Product Recall

List. General information on FDA recall resource page including announcements in different languages. (1/20/2009)

- FDA Recall: Premier Nutrition Bars (1/20/2009)
- FDA Recall: Baxter Colleague Single and Triple Channel Volumetric Infusion Pumps (1/23/09)
- FDA Recall: ZOLL AED Plus Defibrillator (2/12/2009)
- Baxter Press Release: FDA Classifies Recent Urgent Device Correction on Baxter's Colleague Infusion Pump as a Class I Recall (3/11/09)
- FDA Recall: Caraco Pharmaceutical Announces a Nationwide Voluntary Recall of All Lots of Digoxin Tablets (3/31/2009)
- Warning regarding a group of unknown individuals posing as Medicare representatives are soliciting personal identification information from physicians through various corrupt schemes (6/16/2009).
- Warning on Use of GDH-PQQ (glucose dehydrogenase pyrroloquinoline quinine) strips & meters (8/25/2009)

- Warning & Adverse Reaction to MyFortic (9/8/2009)
- New USP Standards for Heparin Products Will Result in Decreased Potency (10/01/2009)
- Philips Issues Worldwide Recall of Select Heartstart Fr2+ Automated External Defibrillators Posted (10/03/2009)
- Unomedical Issues Worldwide Recall of Certain Manual Pulmonary Resuscitators (10/7/2009)

- Dexferrum (iron dextran injection) - Labeling Change Posted 10/27/2009

Additionally, the Network 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.