



# Dialysis & Nephrology

A monthly report by Benesch on the  
Dialysis & Nephrology Industry

# DIGEST

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June 10, 2024

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## Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST



Please contact us if you would like to post

information regarding your upcoming events or if you'd like to guest author an article for this newsletter.

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### Calendar of Events

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AUGUST 14–17, 2024

**AMP: The Amputation Prevention Symposium**

Chicago, IL

For more information, please click [here](#).

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SEPTEMBER 16–18, 2024

**ANNA: Nephrology Nursing Summit**

Atlanta, GA

For more information, please click [here](#).

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SEPTEMBER 27–28, 2024

**RPA Advocacy Weekend**

Washington, DC

For more information, please click [here](#).

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SEPTEMBER 28, 2024

**2024 Renal Physicians Association PAL Forum**

Washington, DC

For information, please click [here](#).

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OCTOBER 23–27, 2024

**ASN Kidney Week 2024**

San Diego Convention Center

San Diego, CA

For more information, please click [here](#).

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FEBRUARY 7–9, 2025

**ASDIN: 21st Annual Scientific Meeting**

Grapevine, TX

For more information, please click [here](#).

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FEBRUARY 16–19, 2025

**American Venous Forum: Annual Meeting**

Atlanta, GA

For more information, please click [here](#).

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MARCH 29–APRIL 2, 2025

**SIR: 2025 Annual Scientific Meeting**

Nashville, TN

For more information, please click [here](#).

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APRIL 3–6, 2025

**Renal Physicians Association 2025 Annual Meeting**

Las Vegas, NV

For more information, please click [here](#).

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MAY 1–4, 2025

**ANNA: 2025 National Symposium**

Portland, OR

For information, please click [here](#).

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NOVEMBER 5–9, 2025

**ASN Kidney Week 2025**

Houston, TX

For more information, please click [here](#).

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June 10, 2024

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## Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

### Nephrology and Dialysis

MAY 23, 2024

#### **KCP supports House bill to restore original intent of Medicare Secondary Payer Act**

Kidney Care Partners (KCP) commends the 36 co-sponsors of the [bill](#) before the House, who come from both sides of the aisle and represent 20 states. The proposed legislation is designed to restore provisions from the Medicare Secondary Payer Act (MSPA) that were [struck down](#) by SCOTUS in 2022. That ruling allowed health plans to kick members with ESRD off of private plans and onto Medicare, which KCP contends increases out-of-pocket expenses for patients while straining the sustainability of Medicare. The bill would ensure uninterrupted access to dialysis care on private insurance for 30 months, “upholding the rights of individuals with kidney failure.”

**SOURCE: Kidney Care Partners**

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MAY 8, 2024

#### **HHS proposes six-year pilot of payment model to increase access to kidney transplants**

The Increasing Organ Transplant Access Model [proposed rule](#) would offer performance-based incentives or penalties to hospitals performing kidney transplants. CMS is looking for at least 90 facilities that perform over 10 procedures in a three-year baseline period to participate in the initiative. Public comments about the proposed rule will be accepted until July 8. CMS is confident the measure will increase the number of kidney transplants performed, while improving accountability and equity of access. The National Kidney Foundation is studying the details of the CMS policy proposal but [says](#) it's in favor of any program that increases the number of kidneys transplanted. Meanwhile, the American Society of Nephrology [credited](#) its advocacy for effecting a change that aligns with its goals.

Related: [ASN, AST take joint step towards transplant nephrology training](#)—American Society of Nephrology

**SOURCE: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

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**June 10, 2024**

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## **Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)**

MAY 21, 2024

### **CA delaying minimum wage hikes for healthcare workers by at least one month**

An increase in the minimum wage for healthcare staff to \$18 per hour was supposed to take effect June 1. However, state lawmakers are seeking to push through an urgency bill that would delay implementation until July 1, the beginning of the next fiscal year and two weeks after CA's budget must be passed. While meant to provide a livable wage to support staff in the healthcare system, the raise has sparked considerable opposition from industry players and their political allies. They argue the first increase would raise CA's budget deficit for the current fiscal year by \$4 billion, on top of the \$45 billion the state already owes. The original bill would provide further stepwise increases in the minimum wage until it reaches \$25 per hour in 2028.

**SOURCE: Becker's Hospital Review**

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MAY 13, 2024

### **DaVita hires Wells Fargo exec as CIO to lead digital transformation**

[Madhu Narasimhan](#) spent the past eight years at Wells Fargo, where she was an EVP as well as head of innovation and COO for strategy, digital and innovation. Prior to that, she was at Kaiser Permanente for 13 years, rising to VP of virtual care, analytics and innovation. As CIO at DaVita, Narasimhan will oversee the implementation of the company's technology platforms and lead its tech innovation strategies, such as [Center Without Walls](#), a cloud-based patient data platform.

**SOURCE: DaVita**

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# **Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST**

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June 10, 2024

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## Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

### Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

MAY 2, 2024

#### **DaVita petitions federal court to reject bid by workers to consolidate class actions over wages**

The company claims workers attempting to merge class actions over wages are trying to circumvent earlier rulings limiting the case's scope, so it's **asking** that the consolidation petition be rejected. In 2021, a former nurse at DaVita filed a proposed class action over unpaid overtime and making employees work through lunch. It was certified for nine states but the judge ruled there was insufficient cause to extend the case nationwide. In a separate decision, the judge rejected the plaintiff's request to amend the complaint to include violations of rest break policies. Meanwhile, a second class action filed by the same worker in 2023 accused DaVita of failing to compensate employees in 41 states for work performed during meal and rest breaks. The plaintiff then asked for the cases to be consolidated. The company claims the plaintiffs are trying an end around the earlier court rulings, creating "a nationwide collective action in everything but name."

**SOURCE: Law360 (sub. rec.)**

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APRIL 25, 2024

#### **CA judge dismisses class action claiming DaVita shared patient data with Meta, Google**

The plaintiffs **alleged** the dialysis provider violated CA privacy laws by supplying private data with the social media platforms, through tracking technologies installed on its website, app and patient portals. The proposed class action said these online platforms are owned by DaVita, adding the company encouraged their use by clients, even though unauthorized third parties could intercept the communications and ultimately monetize personal data via personalized ads. DaVita moved to dismiss the case, stating no claim was made against the company "upon which relief can be granted." The District Court **agreed** and dismissed the case, saying there was no evidence the plaintiffs' personal data was shared without their prior consent. The ruling gives the plaintiffs the opportunity to amend the complaint with additional facts.

**SOURCE: Bloomberg Law (sub. rec.)**

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June 10, 2024

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## Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

### Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

MAY 11, 2024

#### **Fresenius CEO predicts 2% YoY growth in U.S. dialysis sessions in 2024 as pandemic slump fades**

Helen Giza [says](#) the fallout from the pandemic, which led to an increased number of deaths among dialysis patients with comorbidities like cardiovascular disease, appears to be stabilizing. She's confident that sessions at Fresenius dialysis centers in the U.S. will increase this year relative to last by between 0.5% and 2%. Furthermore, growth in the volume of visits could return to pre-pandemic levels of between 2% and 3% in 2025. The pandemic wreaked havoc on Fresenius' dialysis business, but higher pricing and cost-cutting measures enabled it to beat Q1 financial expectations. The company is seeking a partner to assume a majority stake in its dialysis unit and handle its day-to-day operations.

Related: [Fresenius Medical Care AGM: Company makes significant progress in its transformation efforts](#)—Fresenius Medical Care

SOURCE: Reuters

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APRIL 29, 2024

#### **Renal Care 360 partnership expands services in Central FL**

Through an agreement with [Mid-Florida Kidney & Hypertension Care](#), patients will have access to Renal Care 360's kidney care program Connected Care at six locations in the Orlando area. Renal Care 360° says the expansion adds 5,000 patients to the 25,000 it was providing polychronic care management services to nationwide.

SOURCE: Renal Care 360

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MAY 15, 2024

#### **Baxter unveils branding for kidney care spinout Vantive**

Last year, Baxter revealed it intended to carve out a kidney care company called [Vantive](#) from its renal care and acute therapies businesses. The separation is expected to occur in the second half of 2024, either through a sale to a PE investor or spun off into a publicly traded company. As part of the process, the company revealed a logo and mission statement for Vantive. Until completion of the separation, the kidney care business will continue to operate as Baxter.

SOURCE: Baxter

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## Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

### Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

MAY 14, 2024

#### **Evergreen Nephrology bringing value-based kidney care model to CO practice**

[Western Nephrology](#) operates nephrology practices in the Denver and Boulder metro areas. Through its collaboration with Nashville's [Evergreen Nephrology](#), Western will implement a value-based care model emphasizing holistic, personalized treatment plans incorporating advanced data analytics and technology, as well as collaborative care practices. This is Evergreen's third foray into the CO market, following partnerships with Colorado Kidney Care in Denver and The Nephrology Clinic in Fort Collins.

**SOURCE: Evergreen Nephrology**

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MAY 2, 2024

#### **Evergreen Nephrology builds out executive team with appointment of president, CIO**

Named president of the Nashville-based dialysis provider, [Heather Trafton](#) has over 10 years of experience as a senior executive in the healthcare industry, most recently as CEO and president at Mass Advantage, a health plan based in MA. Evergreen Nephrology CIO, [Ron Margalit](#), is a 25-year veteran of the health tech sector and spent the past three years as CIO at InnovaCare Health of Orlando.

**SOURCE: Evergreen Nephrology**

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MAY 6, 2024

#### **American Renal Associates notifies authorities of data breach from possible ransomware attack**

The company [informed](#) the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights of a breach affecting 501 individuals as a result of a hacking or IT incident involving a network server. American Renal Associates d/b/a Innovative Renal Care informed those affected their personal data may have been accessed by an unauthorized third party, who may have leaked the information. Although not confirmed, a ransomware gang reportedly took credit for the attack, which it claims occurred on Mar. 2.

**SOURCE: JDSupra**

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## Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

### Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

MAY 21, 2024

#### **TN-based kidney care provider attains NCQA credentialing accreditation**

[Monogram Health](#) says the certification from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), credentialing accreditation, recognizes its focus on consumer protection and customer service improvement. The company says the decision aligns with its value-based kidney care model, with its emphasis on the successful liaising between patients, clinical staff and provider teams. Monogram adds its the third NCQA accreditation it has received, following population health program accreditation in 2020 and case management accreditation last year.

**SOURCE: Monogram Health**

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MAY 8, 2024

#### **Premier partnering with pharma company to deliver AI-tech to improve CKD diagnoses**

Through a collaboration with AstraZeneca, Charlotte-based healthcare company [Premier](#) developed the Uncover CKD-Care Collective, a series of AI-enabled technologies designed to identify patients with undiagnosed CKD. Central to the initiative is [PINC AI Applied Sciences](#) which combines real-world healthcare data, lab data and AI technology to:

- Identify high-volume areas of unidentified, at-risk patients;
- Screen undiagnosed CKD patients;
- Estimate prevalence and report hospital-specific patient counts; and
- Describe patient characteristics and the clinical and economic outcomes of undiagnosed CKD.

Premier states the collective shows how cross-sector collaborations provide more robust data so advanced analytics can better diagnose and treat chronic illnesses like CKD.

**SOURCE: Premier**

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June 10, 2024

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## Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

MAY 23, 2024

### **Report finds physician pay increased 6% YoY in 2023; nephrologists among specialists with highest average increases**

Doximity, an online networking service for medical professionals, [says](#) nephrology had the seventh-highest annual compensation increase in 2023 relative to 2022, at 7.7%. The average compensation for nephrologists was \$365,323 last year. It [reports](#) pediatric nephrology had the second-lowest annual compensation among the specialties in 2023 at \$227,450. Overall, physicians' pay increased YoY by 5.9% in 2023, compared to 2022's overall decline YoY of 2.4%. Despite higher compensation across the board, Doximity notes inflation continues to be a drag on revenues, as are cuts in Medicare payments. It adds the gender wage gap for physicians declined to 23% in 2023, a five-percentage-point drop from two years before, but men in the profession still earn \$102,000 more per year than women.

**SOURCE: Becker's Hospital Review**

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JUNE 4, 2024

### **RHA, RSE develop 2G version of HIE platform with support for real-time QIP assessments**

[The Renal Healthcare Association](#) (RHA) and its subsidiary, [Renal Services Exchange](#) (RSE), state the health information exchange dubbed [HIE 2.0](#) combines kidney-centric data with analytics to produce:

- A streamlined process for migrating patient data into CMS directly from EMRs;
- Real-time feedback on EQRS data submissions, providing an audit trail for discrepancies;
- Access to an online support system with direct connections to CMS and/or RHA's HIE team;
- RHA regularly engages in direct dialogue with CMS and the EQRS IT development team, advocating for optimal data gathering practices and utilization of quality improvement (QI) data;
- Vendor Partnership: We collaborate closely with all the EMR vendor teams to enhance their understanding of CMS data requirements and ensure readiness for future CMS initiatives; and
- RHA members benefit from a discount on pricing for the service.

RHA notes the HIE system can support kidney-focused research, real-time quality incentive program (QIP) assessments and quality improvement initiatives at centers, while providing facilities with evidence of their value during negotiations with MA plans.

**SOURCE: Renal Healthcare Association**

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## Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

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## **Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST**

### **Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)**

JUNE 6, 2024

#### **Bipartisan bill to prioritize early CKD education, screening reintroduced in U.S. Senate**

Co-sponsored by Sens. Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), [S.4469](#) is companion legislation to a bipartisan measure [introduced](#) in the House last year. Noting that a majority of Americans with CKD are unaware they have it in its early stages, the bill supports patient education and screening so risk factors can be identified. S.4469 also includes:

- A long-term payment pathway for next-generation tools and treatments needed to fight kidney disease;
- Provisions ensuring access to care by boosting the kidney care workforce through sustainable payments and providing Medigap coverage to all ESRD patients, regardless of age; and
- A provision to delay the inclusion of phosphate-lowering, oral-only drugs into the payment system bundle until 2033.

**SOURCE: Kidney Care Partners**

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### **VAC, ASC and Office-Based Labs**

MAY 9, 2024

#### **Panoramic Health opens ASC in Tampa in association with FL's largest nephrology group**

Tempe-based [Panoramic Health](#) opened a five-suite, 10,000-square-foot ASC in Tampa in collaboration with [Florida Kidney Physicians](#) (FKP). Panoramic, which operates outpatient surgery centers in Phoenix, Tucson and Houston, says the FKP Tampa Surgery Center is its first venture in the FL market. However, the partners are looking at expanding across the state, noting FKP has over 100 providers. Meanwhile, the company [appointed](#) Dr. Navdeep Tangri as senior advisor for Panoramic Science.

**SOURCE: Panoramic Health**

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June 10, 2024

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## Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

### VAC, ASC and Office-Based Labs (cont'd)

MAY 7, 2024

#### **U.S. Renal Care documents impacts of vascular access education for patients in video**

U.S. Renal Care (USRC) [discusses](#) the role of education in determining the optimal vascular access option for dialysis patients in a short video featuring a client and her USRC social worker. The film highlights the necessity of explaining the advantages and disadvantages of arteriovenous (AV) fistulas, AV grafts and central venous catheters (CVC) to hemodialysis patients. In the film, the patient transitions from a CVC to an AV fistula, sharing the benefits of the procedure. She also expresses her gratitude for the relationship with the social worker and the USRC staff. USRC Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Mary Dittrich, says the patient's story illustrates how improved education leads to better outcomes.

SOURCE: U.S. Renal Care

For more information regarding our nephrology, dialysis and office-based lab experience, or if you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please contact:

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