

Kidney *Chronicles*

END-STAGE RENAL DISEASE NETWORK OF NEW ENGLAND

MARCH 2015

HELPFUL TIPS TO
EMPOWER ESRD
PATIENTS AS
CONSUMERS



Improving Healthcare
for the Common Good®

March is National Social Work Month

To recognize the contributions of social workers across the country, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has selected the theme “Social Work Paves the Way for Change” for this year’s observance of National Social Work Month in March.



In addition, NASW has named March 16th “National Social Work Day” and March 20th “World Social Work Day.”

This year’s observance of National Social Work Month kicks off the NASW’s 60th Anniversary and will celebrate the accomplishments of the social work profession in bringing about positive change for individuals, families and society as a whole. IPRO’s End-Stage Renal Disease Network of New England’s mission is to improve the quality of care for residents of New England states who require dialysis or transplantation as a life-sustaining treatment. Renal social workers provide a support system to patients and families in adjusting to and understanding ESRD, and in helping patients live healthy lives, both physically and emotionally.

We invite you to join us in celebrating the contributions of these professionals by observing National Social Work month and acknowledging your facility’s social workers.

Renal social workers support you by:

• **Helping You Manage Your Kidney Disease**

Social workers help you, the dialysis patient, to learn more about what is happening to your body and to sort out any other information you may need to know regarding your diagnosis. They also provide you with information about treatment options and help you to make the appropriate decisions about your care.

How the Network Serves You

- Advocates on your behalf;
- Answers your questions about treatment, modality choices or other issues;
- Develops and provides educational materials, i.e., newsletters, for you and your family;
- Works with renal professionals to improve the care provided to you;
- Helps keep you informed and updated to support your involvement in your care and treatment options; and
- Evaluates and resolves grievances.

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• **Watching Over Your Quality of Life**

Social workers monitor you from day one of dialysis to ensure that you are adjusting your life to your kidney disease, while still being able to feel like your “normal self.”

• **Helping You Continue Your Life Goals**

Social workers continuously encourage you to set goals for yourself and attain what you desire in life. They work to ensure that your dialysis treatment and care does not interfere with what you want to achieve and accomplish in your personal life. Your social worker will help you to live a life that is physically, emotionally, and socially balanced.

• **Helping Your Family and Friends to Understand**

By helping to provide information to your family and friends about your kidney disease, social workers will help you build a strong, sympathetic support system that will help you through your dialysis treatments.

• **Making Sure That You Are Satisfied With Your Care**

They serve as patient advocates. Your social worker communicates your needs to the treatment team members and works to build and maintain a trusting relationship with you. Social workers strive to make sure that patients feel safe and comfortable with their treatment. Knowing this should give you a level of comfort in voicing your concerns and questions about your dialysis care to ensure that you are receiving the best quality treatment.

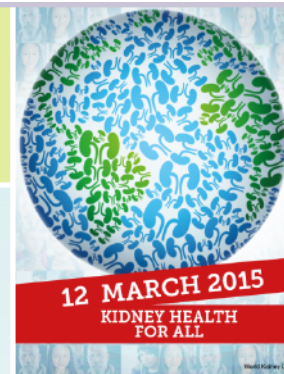
National Kidney Month and World Kidney Day

Since 2006, the second Thursday in March (March 12th this year) has been set aside to acknowledge “World Kidney Day.” In the United States, the entire month of March is recognized as “National Kidney Month.”

Many kidney/chronic kidney disease (CKD) focused organizations like the American Kidney Fund, the American Association of Kidney Patients, the Northeast Kidney Foundation, the National Kidney Foundation and the Renal Support Network are observing National Kidney Month and World Kidney Day with events, webinars, special articles, and press releases. The goal of this effort is to bring awareness to the public about what can be done to prevent kidney disease and to support those individuals living with CKD, as well as ESRD patients on dialysis and people with kidney transplants.

Resources for people living with ESRD:

- The Northeast Kidney Foundation: www.healthykidneys.org
- The American Kidney Fund: www.kidneyfund.org
- The American Association of Kidney Patients: www.aakp.org
- The National Kidney Foundation: www.kidneys.org
- The Renal Support Network: www.rsnhope.org
- Home Dialysis Central: <http://forums.homedialysis.org>
- I Hate Dialysis: <http://ihatedialysis.com/forum/index.php>



To file a grievance, please contact:

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