



Resources to Support Underserved and Undocumented Patients



When faced with a healthcare emergency, it is difficult to clearly think of the steps that should be taken to meet the patient’s needs and ensure the best outcome. This guide is intended to help medical professionals find resources and teams who will care for underinsured or uninsured patients.

The IPRO ESRD Network Program serves renal patients, dialysis facilities, and transplant centers in 13 states in the U.S. We have undertaken a focused effort to gather resources that can support social workers in guiding underserved and/or undocumented patients to appropriate services. The collections of tools and resources on the following pages have been gathered through extensive research and assistance from community partners.

NOTE:
This resource guide is intended to help social work professionals find and share supportive services for underserved and undocumented individuals. It is not a comprehensive guide, but should be viewed and used as a starting point.

Aside from the individual’s medical needs, there are likely to be additional concerns related to:

- Limited availability of safe and equitable housing
- Difficulty in accessing healthy and safe foods
- Lack of reliable transportation to and from work or medical appointments
- Limited financial resources
- Lack of childcare access
- Lack of legal services access
- Limited information about and access to resources that help support emotional wellbeing
- Lack of vocational rehabilitation support
- Lack of access to language, literacy, health literacy, and education resources
- Isolation and lack of community and social cohesion

As you conduct your patient’s needs assessment and identify health priorities, here are resources to help you address each of the topics listed above. Please note that specific sections apply to either individuals with undocumented status or to underserved individuals with U.S. citizenship. Additional sections apply to both of these categories. Please refer to the labeling above the text to clarify the appropriate audience for each section.

Resources to Support Undocumented and Underserved Patients (continued)

COLOR KEY

■ Underserved U.S. Citizen

■ Undocumented Status

■ Undocumented and Underserved

Healthcare – Access to Practitioners Who Will Treat Underinsured or Uninsured Individuals

■ Undocumented and Underserved

As a first step, it is important for all patients to know their rights and the options that may be available to them.

ESRD Care

■ Undocumented Status

If you encounter a patient in need of ESRD care and whose status is undocumented or suspected undocumented, you will find helpful information in the Emergency Medicaid Guide. Emergency Medicaid is an application-based program that covers the costs of emergency health care for undocumented individuals who qualify. Applications for Emergency Medicaid are made after emergency care has been provided, and if approved, coverage is retroactive for the emergency services. The Emergency Medicaid program is run differently from state to state, and options specific to dialysis care will vary. Specific information about each state, including coverage and links to apply, is included in IPRO ESRD Network-specific charts.

Hospital Care

■ Undocumented and Underserved

Hospitals and clinics have arrangements with a variety of charity care and financial assistance programs, as well as sliding scales (you may have to show proof of income).

Safety-net hospitals are provided in this [state-by-state list](#). An online search will also provide information on safety-net hospitals, county hospitals, public hospitals, and essential hospitals in your area.

Primary Care

■ Undocumented and Underserved

The National Association of Free & Charitable Clinics has a [Find A Clinic tool](#) which may help you locate family or non-ESRD primary care.

Use your ZIP code to locate a Federally Qualified Health Center with the [Find a Health Center](#) search tool.

The federally funded Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) provides low-cost health coverage to children in families that earn too much money to qualify for Medicaid but not enough to buy private insurance. In some states, CHIP covers pregnant women.

Access to Medication

■ Undocumented and Underserved

Prescription Discount Cards: The National Kidney Foundation (NKF) offers a prescription discount card, [BuzzRx®](#), which provides discounts for any of your patient's prescriptions. Patients who present this card to their pharmacist when they have prescriptions filled can receive savings up to 80%. The [BuzzRx card](#) can be used at more than 60,000 drug stores nationwide; locate the store closest to your patient's location. To obtain a card, patients should visit [Prescription Discount Card - BuzzRx](#).

Drug Assistance Platforms:

[GoodRx®](#) is a free online price comparison platform for prescription drugs. It can track the pricing of medications at different pharmacies and help patients find their prescription at the lowest price.

Prescription Assistance Resources: The [NKF](#) provides a comprehensive list of resources offered by drug companies.

■ Underserved U.S. citizen

Review with patients enrolled in Medicare:

- Coverage options, like Medicare Part D, can be found in the Medicare Plan Finder Tool during open enrollment.
- The [Medicare Extra Help Subsidy](#)
- Local pharmacies that may have reduced medication costs, and local medication programs. In general, these pharmacies are attached to local hospitals or colleges.

■ Undocumented status

Different states have programs in place with organizations and charity funding. Connect your patients with a local ethnic or immigrant advocacy organization so they can explore options and see if they meet criteria.

Resources to Support Undocumented and Underserved Patients (continued)

Safe and Equitable Housing

■ *Underserved U.S. citizen*

Please visit the website of the [National Council on Aging \(NCOA\)](#) to help locate an advocate that may be able to provide you with information to help to connect with resources dealing with local housing, disability housing, senior living, or other specialty housing that may be specific to your locality.

Diet /Access to Healthy and Safe Foods

■ *Undocumented status*

Different states have different programs in place with organizations and charity funding. Connect your patients with a local ethnic or immigrant advocacy group so they can explore options and see if they meet criteria.

■ *Undocumented and Underserved*

Please check the [NCOA website](#) to locate an advocate that may be able to direct your patients to local farmers markets or grocery programs for seniors or those with disabilities.

■ *Underserved U.S. citizen*

Your patients may qualify for a federal program traditionally known as Food Stamps (EBT, Electronic Benefits Transfer cards) for a food allowance. Applications are made through local social services offices.

Transportation To and From Work or Medical Appointments

■ *Underserved U.S. citizen*

Many states already have programs in place to assist with transportation needs. Some states use vendors such as Modivcare, a company that works directly with patients and their care teams to determine exact transportation needs and process medical orders for a routine transport.

Some states still rely on state funded programs for rural transportation, but generally have safeguards in place for those who work or need transportation for medical appointments. Some have gas voucher programs that give patients the ability to travel in a personal vehicle and track mileage. To sign up, patients will likely need an appointment with their local (county) social services or transportation office.

Financial Resources

■ *Undocumented and Underserved*

Different types of financial resources are available to localities. Some advocates with the National Council on Aging may be able to assist with finding local grants program for specific needs.

■ *Undocumented and Underserved*

The ESRD National Coordinating Center has a searchable Patient Grant Library.

■ *Underserved U.S. citizen*

The American Kidney Fund has programs in place to help patients.

■ *Undocumented status*

Different states have programs in place with organizations and charity funding. Connect your patients with a local ethnic or immigrant advocacy group so they can explore options and see if they meet criteria.

Access to Childcare

■ *Underserved U.S. citizen*

Some localities offer stipends for childcare needs through social services offices.

■ *Undocumented and Underserved*

Community groups, social groups, or religious organizations within the patient's local area may offer support for childcare.

Access to Legal Services

■ *Undocumented status*

The National Immigration Law Center has an [online directory](#) of providers of legal services for low-income immigrants.

Connect your patients with a local ethnic or immigrant advocacy group to find out if they offer legal support options.

■ *Undocumented and Underserved*

The [Department of Justice](#) offers a list of available pro-bono legal services

■ *Underserved U.S. citizen*

Contact your local legal aid office.

Resources to Support Undocumented and Underserved Patients (continued)

Access to Emotional Support Resources

■ *Undocumented and Underserved*

Most federally qualified health centers are connected to social workers or nurse practitioners with some specialized mental health training. Other sources may be available depending on the state in which the patient resides.

There are mobile app mental health support options that offer payment plans and alternate modality options for counseling (type on demand, change counselors as you need, etc.).

Additional resources are available on the [IPRO ESRD Network Program website](#).

Vocational Rehabilitation

■ *Underserved U.S. citizen*

Vocational rehabilitation can be defined as volunteering, working part-time or full-time, or schooling to name a few. Studies show that employed dialysis patients live longer than those who stop working. Patients who work typically have reduced rates of depression and hospitalizations, as well as regular income, access to commercial health insurance, and higher incidences of transplant. Every state and locality has designated vocational rehabilitation programs. Some programs will help with home modifications so that patients can stay at home without disrupting their routines. Some programs will assess and place patients who are eager to be employed.

The Family Medical Leave Act gives people emergency time off to care for dependents or themselves if they are too ill. The individual may return to the same job or one that is comparable to it. This law affects not only those being treated for kidney disease, but also those who decide to donate a kidney to a loved one.

The Americans with Disabilities Act makes it unlawful for employers to discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities and requires most employers to make “reasonable accommodations” to remove obstacles to continued employment. ESRD qualifies as a disability under the act.

The [Ticket to Work Program](#) can be useful for patients who are contemplating a change.

The [Social Security Administration’s Blue Book](#) provides important information about how working may impact disability payments.

Additional Resources

- Information about local community programs and resources may be available at local libraries. <https://navigator.aafp.org>
- The [U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services](#) (SAMHSA) website.
- Your area’s [Office for Minority Health](#). Please refer to the map to find your state’s contact for minority health.
- Your area may also have faith-based or community-based programs to assist with a wide variety of the needs listed above. It is helpful to network in the community to locate a solution by discussing your needs with these organizations.



End-Stage Renal Disease
Network Program

For more information or to file a grievance, please contact us:

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