

House Committee on Ways and Means

Statement of Association of Dialysis Advocates December 20, 2006

The Association of Dialysis Advocates (ADA) is a grassroots patient/family advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring quality, safe care for dialysis patients. ADA is selffunded through personal contributions of our members. We do not accept financial or other contributions from the dialysis industry, pharmaceutical industry, healthcare industry, or any government entity so that we maintain our integrity and objectivity in addressing dialysis-related issues.

ADA is encouraged by the House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee's hearing of December 6, 2006 re: the ESRD Program. We are encouraged that our congressional representatives are holding Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) accountable for the quality of care provided dialysis patients and for the efficient use of taxpayer dollars that fund care. We are encouraged that our representatives expressed favor towards a "patients come first" policy and pointed to the need for CMS policies to reflect such a policy....

Making Informed Decisions

ADA supports the 2004 ESRD Initiative for Quality Care. However, ADA also firmly believes that the initiative's original intention regarding the Dialysis Facility Compare website and chart was to "empower consumers with quality of care information to make more informed decisions about their healthcare" and such has not been met. Patients and consumers still need "to review and compare facilities and choose a dialysis facility that best meets their needs." While there is information posted regarding anemia, hemodialysis adequacy, and patient survival, ADA believes the information is limited. Dialysis Facility Compare does not provide other highly pertinent information for ordinary patients and/or consumers to truly make informed decisions. For instance, patients and consumers are greatly interested in (a) staffing--including their education, skills knowledge and training, and licensing and/or certification (b) inspection reports, and (c) infections and infection rates. And, most unfortunately, the information provided is not easily understood by ordinary patient-consumers. Both the public disclosure and the simplification of the information found on the Dialysis Facility Compare chart will support informed decision-making while furthering patient education and safety....

*See full ADA Statement
Commentaries
December 20, 2006*