

# Kidney Community Emergency Response (KCER) Program Deliverable 63: Annual Summary

*May 31, 2023*





# KCER Option Period One (OP1) Annual Summary

## Overview

HSAG was re-awarded the KCER Program contract in June 2021 and has now completed the first Option Period (OP1) of the contract. The vision for KCER is to build on its current foundation while continuing to follow the concepts, principles, and best practices of an all-hazards comprehensive emergency management program to support the ESRD community during major crisis or disaster.

KCER plays a leadership and coordinating role at the national level for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and the End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Network Program, related to emergency and disaster situations. Specifically, KCER is charged with the centralized coordination of efforts to ensure the safety of ESRD patients, through the development and maintenance of an emergency management infrastructure, whose primary mission is to coordinate access to, and continuity of, care and services. The KCER Program collaboratively develops, disseminates, implements, and maintains a coordinated emergency/disaster preparedness and response program and functions as a leading nationwide authority on emergency preparedness, by providing organization and guidance that seamlessly bridges emergency management stakeholders and the ESRD community.

## National KCER Patient and Family Engagement Learning and Action Network (N-KPFE-LAN)

The involvement of the patient subject matter experts (SMEs) in the N-KPFE-LAN ensures that the patient voice is incorporated into all KCER activities and encourages a patient perspective for emergency and disaster preparation. During OP1, the N-KPFE-LAN had 26 members consisting of patients, family members, and caregivers drawn from across the ESRD community.

The N-KPFE-LAN Kickoff Meeting took place on July 19, 2022, with subsequent bi-monthly meetings. Patients were able to join the meetings by teleconference or WebEx.

The N-KPFE-LAN members worked together to create a patient centered Quality Improvement Activity (QIA) with two resources called [Evacuating - Why Dialysis Patients Need to Follow Evacuation Orders](#) and [How to Appoint a Healthcare Surrogate \(English and Spanish\)](#).

Between scheduled meetings, the N-KPFE-LAN utilized the online platform Basecamp to encourage SMEs to remain engaged in sharing ideas and resources. The Basecamp platform allowed the KCER team to pose questions and discussion topics to the N-KPFE-LAN members on issues impacting the ESRD community to help ensure that the patient voice was incorporated into all KCER activities. Utilizing Basecamp, N-KPFE-LAN members also shared stories on how they educated patients, providers, and caregivers





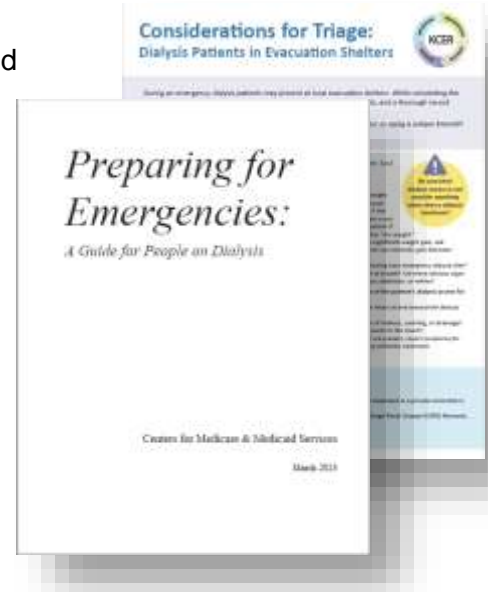
on preparing for an emergency or disaster, including posting resources on a facility bulletin board, and sharing printed resources at the facility.

Additionally, two N-KPFE-LAN SMEs participated as part of the 2023 KCER Summit session, *Dialysis and Kidney Transplant Patient Disaster Preparedness*. The fifty-minute session provided the SMEs with an opportunity share personal stories and best practices on preparing for emergencies or disasters.

## Education and Technical Assistance

KCER works directly with the ESRD Networks, dialysis facilities, and patients to improve the care and services provided to during disasters and emergencies through the provision of educational webinars, educational tools and resources, and technical assistance. KCER developed an Educational Plan that was approved by CMS in July 2022. The Education Plan served as a guide for conducting and providing education at the Network, provider, and patient levels, and will continually incorporate feedback from stakeholders.

KCER is continually reviewing existing resources to determine if updates are needed to ensure that the resources better meet the needs of the dialysis community. During OP1 KCER reviewed and updated several resources and shared the updated versions with the dialysis community. Updated resources included: *Preparing for Emergencies: A Guide for People on Dialysis* and *Considerations for Triage: Dialysis Patients in Evacuation Shelters*.



Based on the feedback obtained through the ongoing collection of information, KCER is continually evaluating current educational needs for patients, providers, and other stakeholders. During response activities related to recent major disasters, including Hurricane Ian, it was identified that dialysis patients needed additional training and education on the importance of following evacuation orders issues by emergency officials. Based on this feedback, KCER partnered with the N-KPFE-LAN to create a patient centered resource titled, *Evacuating—Why Dialysis Patients Need to Follow Evacuation Orders*.

Additionally, providers and patients continue to express a need for education on preparing for hurricane season. To address this need, KCER hosted a webinar titled *Hurricane Preparedness for Dialysis Patients*, which took place on August 17, 2023. During this event, KCER offered tips for

preparing for the 2022 hurricane season, shared how COVID-19 may impact patient planning, and offered KCER resources for additional support.



2023 KCER National Exercise Week was held from February 21—23, 2023. During KCER National Exercise Week, the 18 ESRD Networks participated as part of four different exercise groups, with each group completing a scenario-based table-top exercise. Each of the four table-top exercises addressed response and recovery operations and allowed the 18 ESRD Networks to demonstrate the ability to execute their roles, responsibilities, and procedures in sustaining dialysis in response to emergency or disaster situations. All 18 Networks participated in the drill and actively tested their ability to respond to a major emergency or disaster.

Network(s) in Group	Table top Exercise Scenario
<b>Networks 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5</b>	Winter Storm
<b>Networks 3, 9, 10, 11, and 12</b>	Winter Storm
<b>Networks 16, 17, and 18</b>	Wildfire
<b>Networks 7, 8, 13, and 14</b>	Bioterror Attack

KCER encouraged the ESRD Networks to increase stakeholder participation by inviting organizations to attend as exercise participants, observers, and/or evaluators. This increased emphasis on stakeholder engagement led to over 250 stakeholders from outside organizations participating across the four table-top exercises, including representatives from emergency management, public health, healthcare coalitions, state survey and certification, dialysis facilities, and dialysis patients. Exercise participants were highly engaged throughout the table-top exercises, and feedback provided during the overall exercise hotwash was very favorable.

### Coordination of Response Efforts

KCER provides support and guidance to ESRD Networks, providers, and other members of the ESRD community during actual emergencies and disasters. All response efforts are tracked by the KCER team, using the KCER Incident Report Tracking Tool, to ensure that all appropriate response actions are carried out. The tool tracks each incident response from the date that the initial request for assistance is received, until the event is over, and the last incident report is distributed. During OP1, KCER provided outreach for a total of 36 incidents that resulted in changes in facility status, including closures and altered schedules, and the team sent 44 incident reports related to the events.

Incident Type		
Tropical System	5	14%
Earthquake	1	3%
Flood Event	5	14%
Monsoon	0	0%
Gas Leak	0	0%
Winter Storm	5	14%
Power Outage	1	3%
Severe Weather	7	19%
Tornado	2	6%
E-coli	0	0%
Chemical Spill	0	0%
Water Outage	2	6%
Wildfire	3	8%
Pandemic	1	3%
Other	4	11%
	<b>36</b>	<b>100%</b>

During OP1, KCER responded to one additional major event during the COVID-19 pandemic. Following a formal request for assistance from CMS, KCER was activated from September 26—October 14, 2022, in response to Hurricane Ian. During this time, KCER coordinated national-level preparedness and response activities, including leading daily emergency status calls, reporting on facility operational status and needs, and collaborating with CMS, ESRD Networks, dialysis organizations, and other stakeholders to identify and address patient access to care issues.



Incident Reports		
May	4	11%
June	1	3%
July	2	6%
August	5	14%
September	18	50%
October	1	3%
November	2	6%
December	6	17%
January	4	11%
February	1	3%
March	0	0%
April	0	0%
	<b>44</b>	<b>100%</b>



Ian was a major hurricane with widespread impacts across the south Florida Gulf Coast, Central Florida, and the Carolinas. Hurricane Ian made landfall on Wednesday, September 28, 2022, near Cayo Costa, Florida, as an extremely dangerous Category 4 hurricane with maximum sustained winds of 155 mph. Ian was downgraded to a tropical storm on September 29 as it tracked inland, crossing over the Florida peninsula, bringing extreme rainfall across much of Florida. After Tropical Storm Ian had crossed over Florida and was over the open water of the Atlantic, it strengthened back into a Category 1 hurricane on September 30 before turning and making landfall in South Carolina just after 2:00 p.m. that day. Ian began to weaken once over land again, becoming a post-tropical cyclone three hours after landfall. The cyclone later dissipated over southern Virginia late on October 1, 2022.



Hurricane Ian impacted Network 6 (North and South Carolina) and Network 7 (Florida), with close to 110 facilities treating roughly 3,500 patients, with reported changes in their operations status due to the storm. The event was problematic with widespread disruptions in all infrastructures (e.g., power, water, roads, transportation, 911 system) within the impacted areas. Nearly all impacted facilities were back open and operational by Friday, October 7, 2022, with the final few closed facilities reopening by Monday, October 10, 2022.

Hurricane Ian's Impact on ESRD Community	
Dialysis Patients 	3,500
Dialysis Facilities 	110

### Stakeholder Collaboration

KCER improved ESRD community stakeholder relationships by continually striving to enhance collaboration opportunities within these groups. Building and sustaining positive relationships among partners is imperative to ensure continuity of care and services for ESRD patients during emergencies or disasters.

During the response and recovery efforts for Hurricane Ian, KCER worked directly with many new and existing stakeholders to improve the overall outcome and recovery for the ESRD patient population. KCER provided daily reports to local, state, and federal partners outlining the status of the incident response, and the operational status and needs of dialysis providers.

KCER participates as an SME on monthly ASPR Healthcare and Public Health (HPH) Sector Coordinating Council (SCC) calls. The HPH SCC is a diverse organization that engages all areas of the healthcare sector. Members gain up-to-the-minute access to critical information about threats, protection issues, and security resources. The HPH SCC also effectively voices member opinions and needs, acting as a major advocate, and resource for, government involvement in the healthcare sector. KCER also participated in emergency calls with the HPH SCC during the response to COVID-19 and Hurricanes Ian. Attendance of these calls served to



elevate the profile of KCER and brought the status and unmet needs of the ESRD community to the group.

In January 2022, KCER was invited to participate as part of the Joint Supply Chain Resilience Working Group (SCRWG). Joint SCRWG's initial task group topics include Essential Medicines, Medical Device List, and PPE Standardization. As part of implementing the *National Strategy for a Resilient Public Health Supply Chain* HHS is engaging experts from the private sector and across the government to share information and best practices, identify threats, and mitigate risks to make U.S. supply chains stronger. This team, called the Joint Supply Chain Resilience Working Group, offers near-real-time information-sharing and collaboration to tackle steady state and emerging risks and build toward a more agile, visible, and robust U.S. public health supply chain.

## Treatment and Medicine Recall Notifications

KCER has developed a process to monitor medical updates for treatment and medication recall notices related to ESRD services. All KCER staff members are registered for the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) MedWatch program to receive e-mails regarding medication and recall alerts. Each alert is reviewed by a nephrology nurse, and if it is determined to be relevant to the ESRD community, it is sent via email to the KCER Safety Alert Distribution List. From May 1, 2022 to April 30, 2023, KCER issued 17 treatment and medication recall notifications to the ESRD community.



## Social Media Outreach

KCER utilizes two social media accounts, Twitter (@KCERProgram) and Facebook (KCERCoalition), as additional outreach for communicating important preparedness information, along with resources and education pertaining to emergency management topics, and events for members of the ESRD community. Account postings are also made daily with topics ranging from disaster preparedness to current infectious disease statuses. The social media accounts also play a major role during response and recovery. KCER uses social media during emergencies or disasters as a tool to provide situational updates, current information, and relevant messaging to the ESRD community in a timely and effective manner.





## Annual KCER Summit

Each year, the KCER Summit is hosted by the KCER Program at the Annual Centers for Medicare & Medicare Services (CMS) Quality Conference. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the 2023 Summit was held virtually on April 20, 2023. More than 200 stakeholders participated in the 2023 Summit, including ESRD Networks, dialysis providers, federal partners, emergency management and public health staff, dialysis and transplant patients, and other renal organizations. The Summit provided participants an opportunity to participate in a virtual conference where sharing of emergency management standards, implementation practices, lessons learned from actual emergency/disaster events, and sharing of tools and resources were the primary focus.

Highlights from the Summit agenda included:

- A presentation by DaVita Kidney Care and Fresenius Kidney Care, titled *Large Dialysis Organization Disaster Response*. The presentation focused on providing an overview on how DaVita Kidney Care and Fresenius Kidney Care prepare for, and respond to, emergencies and disasters that impact dialysis facility operations and patient access to care.
- A panel presentation titled, *Dialysis and Kidney Transplant Patient Disaster Preparedness*, which included patient SMEs who shared their personal stories and experiences related to preparing for emergencies and disasters. The panel also shared how they have contributed to educating their fellow patients on the importance of preparing for disasters.
- A presentation by Dr. Atyia Martin, titled *Climate Change and Disasters: The Intersection with Race, Poverty, and Disability*. The presentation focused on providing knowledge and tools to support participants' role in the ongoing practice of equitably improving the ability of people, communities, and organizations to face the complexities involved.
- A presentation by the Department of Homeland Security, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), titled *Active Shooter Preparedness*. The presentation focused on providing participants with tips on how to effectively develop and enhance planning efforts to prepare for and respond to an active threat.

## Summary

KCER will continue to build on its current foundation and follow the concepts, principles, and best practices of an all-hazards comprehensive emergency management program to support the nation's ESRD organizations and patients during emergencies or disasters. KCER will focus on continually enhancing engagement with the N-KPFE-LAN to ensure that the patient voice is incorporated into all KCER activities. Technology continues to play a major role in disaster response and recovery, and KCER utilizes these technologies to continually evolve and improve situational awareness through continued integration of social media platforms during all phases of an emergency or disaster. Additionally, KCER will continue to facilitate enhanced Network and stakeholder relationships by offering additional collaboration opportunities among these groups. Building and sustaining positive relationships among partners is imperative to ensure continuity of care and services for dialysis patients.