

Kidney Community Emergency Response (KCER) Program Deliverable 93: Annual Summary

November 26, 2019





KCER 2019 Annual Summary

2019 Overview

HSAG was awarded the KCER Program contract in March 2016 and has now completed Option Year Three 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 2019, the N-KPFE-LAN had 33 members consisting of patients, family members, and caregivers, drawn from across the ESRD community.

The N-KPFE-LAN Kickoff Meeting took place in February 2019, with subsequent bi-monthly meetings. Patients were able to join the meetings by teleconference or WebEx, and KCER maintained an 85 percent or higher attendance rate for all of the 2019 meetings. Additionally, between scheduled meetings, the N-KPFE-LAN utilized the online platform Basecamp to encourage SMEs to remain engaged in sharing ideas and resources.

The N-KPFE-LAN members worked together to create a patient centered Quality Improvement Activity (QIA), a campaign called *KCER Emergency Preparedness Week*. The campaign took place during National Preparedness Month, the week of September 23-27, 2019, with each day focusing on a different preparedness topic or KCER resource. The focus of the campaign was to encourage SMEs to provide education





and resources to patients and facility staff on the importance of being prepared before a disaster or emergency strikes. During *KCER Emergency Preparedness Week*, SMEs shared resources, including the 2018 LAN QIA campaign, the *Emergency Preparedness Poster*, with over 630 patients and facility staff members. Feedback from campaign participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many the SMEs expressing interest in continuing the *KCER Emergency Preparedness Week* campaign next year.

At the request of SMEs, the N-KPFE-LAN created a second QIA. The LAN members created a trifold brochure focused on educating the ESRD community on the KCER Program and the different resources and types of technical assistance that are available.



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 March 2019. The Education Plan serves as a guide for conducting and providing education at the Network, provider, and patient levels, and will continually incorporate feedback from stakeholders.

As part of the Educational Plan, KCER conducted a needs assessment to learn more about the educational needs, and overall emergency preparedness knowledge, of ESRD patients and providers, and to assess preferred methods for receiving emergency preparedness education. The results will be used to guide the provision of targeted resources for the renal community. For 2019, KCER augmented the results by collecting ongoing information in a variety of methods, including the KCER Helpline and email communications; After Action Reports (AARs); feedback obtained during conferences and exhibits; collaboration opportunities; and through activities conducted with volunteers, including the N-KPFE-LAN and the KCER Leadership Committee and Subject SMEs.

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 the 2017 and 2018 hurricane seasons, it was identified that staff in emergency evacuation shelters needed additional training on how to properly triage and manage dialysis patients in a shelter setting. Based on this feedback, KCER created a document that provides education for nurses or other medical staff on how to properly triage dialysis patients in evacuation shelters. Additionally, KCER will be holding a webinar training during Option Year 4 to provide education on how to properly utilize the triage resource in the shelter setting.

KCER was invited to participate as a speaker on multiple educational webinars and in-person events throughout the year. KCER presented at the National Healthcare Coalition Preparedness Conference general session on November 29, 2018. In this session, attendees heard from



representatives from Healthcare Ready, KCER, and Airbnb on how the work of these three programs is contributing and making a difference in how communities come together before, during and after emergencies or disasters. Each presenter provided an overview of their organization, how they work with coalition and other partners, and gave attendees ideas on how to cultivate new relationships in their communities. The presentation included nearly 1,000 attendees from healthcare coalitions across the country.

KCER also presented on April 18, 2019, at the *2019 Emergency Management Summit and Training Sessions*. In this session titled “*Can We Ever Meet the Needs of Dialysis Patients Before, During, and After a Catastrophic Event,*” attendees heard from representatives from KCER, IPRO ESRD Network of the South Atlantic, the South Carolina Lowcountry Healthcare Coalition, and the Georgia Department of Public Health. The presentation included an overview of response at each level of the government, the role that the ESRD Networks and KCER play in response activities, and the current projects of the Lowcountry Dialysis Workgroup and the Georgia Department of Public Health Dialysis Workgroup.

KCER participates as an SME on monthly Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) Critical Infrastructure Protection Program (CIP) Healthcare Sector Coordinating Council (HSCC) calls. The HSCC 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 HSCC also effectively voices member opinions and needs, acting as a major advocate, and resource for, government involvement in the healthcare sector

KCER held its Annual National Exercise on November 7, 2019, in the Hillsborough County Emergency Operations Center in Tampa, Florida. The 2019 exercise was an operations-based functional exercise that 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. The overarching scenario was based on each Network experiencing a technology attack on all of the digital systems that utilized to maintain day-to-day operations. Some Networks also chose to include weather related incidents in their respective regions that further impacted dialysis centers and patient access to care. All 18 Networks participated in the drill and actively tested their ability to respond to a major emergency or disaster.

KCER encouraged the ESRD Networks to increase stakeholder participation in the 2019 National Exercise by inviting organizations to attend as exercise participants, observers, and/or evaluators. This increased emphasis on stakeholder engagement led to over 50 outside organizations participating in the exercise, including representatives from emergency management, public health, healthcare coalitions, dialysis facilities, and dialysis patients. Exercise participants were highly engaged throughout the drill, and feedback provided during the 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 2019, KCER responded to a total of 36 events that resulted in over 1,000 changes in facility status, including closures and altered schedules, and the team sent out over 58 incident reports related to the events.

Incident Type		
Tropical System	9	25%
Hurricane	0	0%
Earthquake	1	3%
Flood	4	11%
Flood Event	0	0%
Monsoon	0	0%
Gas Leak	0	0%
Winter Storm	6	17%
Power Outage	1	3%
Severe Weather	6	17%
Tornado	4	11%
E-coli	0	0%
Chemical Spill	0	0%
Water Outage	2	6%
Wildfire	3	8%
Other	0	0%
	36	100%

Incident Reports		
December	1	3%
January	4	11%
February	2	6%
March	3	8%
April	2	6%
May	13	36%
June	0	0%
July	5	14%
August	9	25%
September	4	11%
October	15	42%
November	0	0%
	58	100%

Also, during 2019, KCER activated for two major events, Hurricane Dorian in August, and the California wildfires and Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS). KCER was activated from August 27—September 9, 2019, in response to Hurricane Dorian, and again from October 9—October 31, 2019, for the California wildfires and PSPS. 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, Networks, dialysis organizations, and other stakeholders to identify and address patient access to care issues.

On August 27, 2019, CMS formally requested assistance from KCER in preparation for Hurricane Dorian, which was projected to make landfall in Puerto Rico as a Category 1 hurricane before moving towards the eastern U.S. coastline as a major hurricane. Hurricane Dorian crossed just east of Puerto Rico on August 28, 2019, before slowing skirting the eastern U.S. coastline from southern Florida to the North Carolina/Virginia border as a major hurricane. Hurricane Dorian became one of the Atlantic’s longest-lasting named storms, lasting a total of 15 days before losing tropical characteristics.

Hurricane Dorian’s Impact on ESRD Community	
Dialysis Patients 	48,260
Dialysis Facilities 	735



Hurricane Dorian impacted Network 3 (Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands), Network 6 (Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina) and Network 7 (Florida), with a combined 735 facilities, treating over 48,000 patients, with reported changes in their operations status due to the storm. All facilities in the impacted areas were back to normal operational status by September 9, 2019. The event also caused widespread disruptions to all major infrastructures (e.g. power, water, roads, transportation, and 911 systems) within the impacted areas.



On multiple occasions, KCER worked urgently to connect patients with resources to facilitate rescues from flood and post-hurricane conditions and to assist with emergency transportation and needs for dialysis treatment.

On October 9, 2019, Network 17 formally requested assistance from KCER in preparations for the California PSPS, which occur when power companies preemptively turn off power due to gusty winds and dry conditions and heightened fire risk. The shutoffs were projected to last for up to five days and impact nearly 790,000 residents across 33 counties.

Additionally, on October 28, 2019, KCER began providing assistance in response to multiple large wildfires burning. The wildfires resulted in widespread evacuations for over 200,000 residents in multiple counties across the state.

California Wildfires and Public Safety Power Shutoffs Impact on ESRD Community	
Dialysis Patients 	2,670
Dialysis Facilities 	31

The California Wildfires and PSPS impacted Network 17 (Northern California) and Network 18 (Southern California) with a combined total of 31 facilities, treating over 2,670 patients, with reported changes in their operations status due to the fires. The event caused widespread disruptions to all major infrastructures (e.g. power, water, roads, transportation, and 911 systems) within the impacted areas.

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 Dorian and the California wildfires, KCER worked directly with many new and existing stakeholders to improve the overall outcome and recovery for the ESRD patient population. KCER also provided daily reports outlining the current status of the incident response, and the operational status and needs of dialysis providers.

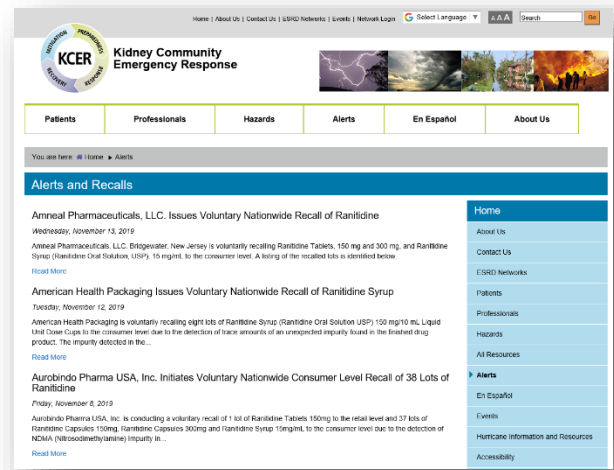
KCER collaborated with an existing partner, Healthcare Ready, to address medication needs as well as supply chain distribution issues. Healthcare Ready also assisted with patient rescues and transportation resources for dialysis patients and providers.

KCER also participated in daily emergency calls with the ASPR CIP HSCC during the response to Hurricanes Florence and Michael. Attendance of these calls served to elevate the profile of KCER and brought the current status and unmet needs of the ESRD community to the group.



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 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, as well as posted on the KCER website and shared via social media. From December 2018 to November 2019, KCER issued 45 treatment and medication recall notifications to the ESRD community.



Social Media Outreach

KCER utilizes two social media accounts, Twitter and Facebook, 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.



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 a 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 strives to improve the technology utilized related to 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.

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