

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

February 2, 2017





KCER 2016 Annual Summary

2016 Overview

Effective March 11, 2016, Health Services Advisory Group (HSAG) was awarded the KCER Program contract. The vision for KCER is to build on its current foundation, and to continue to follow the concepts, principles, and best practices of an all-hazards comprehensive emergency management program to support the renal community during a major crisis or disaster.

The KCER contractor plays a leadership and coordinating role at the national level for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and the ESRD Network Program, related to emergency and disaster situations. Specifically, the contractor is charged with the centralized coordination of efforts to ensure the safety of dialysis 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, for dialysis patients. The KCER contractor collaboratively develops, disseminates, implements, and maintains a coordinated emergency/disaster preparedness and response infrastructure for the kidney community. The KCER contractor functions as the leading authority on emergency preparedness for the kidney community by providing organization and guidance that seamlessly bridges emergency management stakeholders and the ESRD community nationwide.

Response Team Workgroups

KCER is responsible for the coordination of seven workgroups that assist in the development and oversight of a national emergency and disaster program for the ESRD Network Program. The workgroup team members are comprised of representatives from across the kidney community who volunteer to provide support, guidance, and expertise in the development and implementation of an infrastructure to support the dialysis community in times of emergency and disaster.

- **Communications Workgroup:** This workgroup improves and enhances the use of communications technologies to assure that information is available to assist the kidney community in providing continuity of care during the response and recovery phase of an emergency or disaster. During the current year, the workgroup collaborated to secure a December publication date with Nephrology News & Issues for an article on dialysis transportation issues during emergencies. The Workgroup also updated the Kidney Care in Emergency brochure, the Emergency Checklist brochure, and Save a Life brochure. Additionally, the workgroup provided promotion and outreach regarding the new Health Care Coalition requirements.
- **Clinical Practice Workgroup:** The workgroup's goals are to expand outreach, increase involvement of physician groups, and increase the number of states participating in the nursing compact. During the current year, the group provided updates and information regarding changes to the nursing compact documents and provided technical expertise on emergency response calls regarding non-nursing compact states.
- **Executive Oversight Workgroup:** The Executive Committee is comprised of all workgroup leaders and meets two times per year to discuss workgroup projects and update the others on progress, potential overlaps, challenges, and successes. As a result of Executive Committee discussions, concerns of the Physician Expert Workgroup were forwarded to and addressed by the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, who attended several workgroup calls following notification of the physician



- concerns. In addition, KCER was provided the opportunity to attend a training for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) tool, GeoHEALTH.
- **Facility Operations Workgroup:** This workgroup facilitates cooperative planning among the wide variety of dialysis facilities, ESRD Networks, and community disaster planners, as well as assisting with facility preparation, response, and recovery efforts. During the current year, the workgroup shared active shooter resources with KCER, and assisted KCER with perusing active shooter training for facilities and providers within the kidney community.
 - **Pandemic and Infectious Disease Workgroup:** This workgroup develops and disseminates plans to help the kidney community maintain its ability to care for patients in the event of emerging and widespread infectious disease. The workgroup collaborates with Federal, state, and local agencies, along with KCER and other stakeholders, to ensure that emergency management plans and pandemic preparedness plans may be implemented in the event of a public health crisis. The workgroup spearheaded the creation of a separate section on the KCER website with Zika information, news, and resources. Additionally, the workgroup provided expertise and guidance for educational resources for the KCER website and social media sites.
 - **Physician Expert Workgroup:** This workgroup provides nephrology expertise and management of kidney failure and transplant patients during a large-scale crisis. During the current year, the workgroup provided physician expertise during national emergency response calls, including those related to the record-breaking Louisiana flooding that occurred in August and the secondary flooding in the Carolinas caused by Hurricane Matthew.
 - **Training and Exercise Workgroup:** This workgroup focuses on the development of a training program to enhance the kidney community, including patient and provider response capabilities and development of training materials. An additional focus of the workgroup is the development of exercises and drills. During the current year, the workgroup provided input and suggestions on an emergency preparedness video script for dialysis patients.

Preparedness Exercises

In order to continue efforts to integrate the dialysis population into the overall national emergency strategy, KCER participated in two national-level preparedness exercises during 2016:

- **Eagle Horizon Exercise:** The Eagle Horizon Exercise was held from May 16–17, 2016. The scenario for the exercise was a bomb detonation in downtown Washington, District of Columbia.
- **Cascadia Rising Exercise:** The Cascadia Rising Exercise was held from June 7–10, 2016. The scenario for the exercise was an earthquake based in Eugene, Oregon.

KCER participated in the exercises by providing ESRD tracking information, including a list of facilities and patient counts; the operational status of facilities; any facility needs or services; and an update on any involvement of other ESRD Networks or large dialysis organizations (LDOs). KCER also provided multiple status updates over the course of the exercises at the request of CMS. KCER utilized the exercise as an opportunity to test processes and information in the KCER Emergency Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and updates were made to the SOP following each exercise based upon lessons learned.



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 within the emergency and disaster community. The N-KPFE-LAN has 34 members consisting of patients, family members, and caregivers drawn from across the kidney community.

The N-KPFE-LAN Kickoff Meeting took place in June, with subsequent meetings being held every other month. Patients were able to join meetings by teleconference or WebEx. During the initial calls, participants were asked to share their first-hand experiences with disaster preparedness and response. The members also reviewed pre-existing preparedness campaigns and materials, and provided feedback to assist in building a framework for a patient-driven quality improvement activity. Based on participant feedback, KCER collaborated with Network 5 to repackage their successful “What If?” campaign materials for the KCER LAN Campaign. The campaign was rolled out on September 27 during a Kick-Off Webinar and focused on providing patient engagement that the facility could use to engage patients in a discussion regarding emergency preparedness. In total, 407 patients took the campaign pledge to participate. The campaign also included a pre- and post-test to determine any improvements in patient knowledge following the campaign. The results indicated an 18% improvement in the percent of patients that felt they were very prepared for an emergency and a 17% improvement in the percent of patients that felt they understood the 3-day emergency diet very well.

To expand upon the “What If?” Campaign, KCER launched the KCER Emergency Preparedness Selfie Campaign at the American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP) National Patient Meeting in September. Patients have been asked to make a short selfie video that talks about how they prepare for natural disasters or big emergencies. The KCER Emergency Preparedness Selfie Campaign was introduced on the N-KPFE-LAN call in October. The submitted videos will be shared on the ESRD Network National Coordinating Center’s (NCC’s) YouTube page, website, and KCER and NCC social media channels. Partners in the kidney community are also being asked to post the videos to their website and social media outlets.

In addition to engaging the LAN every other month through teleconference and WebEx, KCER implemented an innovative platform to facilitate patient engagement in between meetings. During the August meeting, N-KPFE-LAN members were introduced to Basecamp, which allows patients to comment on resources and start and respond to chat threads. Patients have been continually engaged through Basecamp, and have had highly favorable feedback regarding the activity. Patient comments regarding Basecamp included:

- Excellent vehicle to communicate between meetings!
- This site is incredible...happy to be included.



Education and Technical Assistance

KCER works directly with the ESRD Networks, dialysis facilities, and patients to improve the care and services provided to dialysis patients during emergency and disaster situations through the provision of educational webinars, educational tools and resources, and technical assistance. KCER developed an Educational Plan that was approved by CMS in September. The Educational Plan serves as a guide for conducting and providing education at the Network, provider, and patient levels, and will continually incorporate feedback from stakeholders via the N-KPFE-LAN and the Educational Plan Committee.

As part of the Educational Plan, KCER will be conducting a Patient and Provider Needs Assessment to identify gaps in education and opportunities for additional tools and resources related to emergency preparedness. The results of the needs assessments will be used to develop targeted topics and strategies to address educational gaps and needs that will be tested with 10 facilities recruited from across the country to serve as pilot testers for the Educational Plan. The facilities are located in Florida, Hawaii, Texas, California, Georgia, New York, Wyoming, Washington, and Arizona. Out of the 10 facilities, 50% are LDOs, to include two DaVita facilities, two Fresenius facilities, and one DCI facility. Thirty percent are mid-size or regional chains, to include two Satellite facilities and one DSI facility. The remaining 20% are independent facilities.

Additionally, KCER utilized patient and stakeholder feedback provided in the Educational Plan to implement the LAN Campaign, which was made available to all facilities nationwide in October. As noted above, the campaign included tools and resources to help educate dialysis patients about emergency preparedness. The LAN Campaign was also highlighted as a resource for engaging patients in National Preparedness Month in September.

KCER was invited to partner with the American Kidney Fund (AKF) on a patient education webinar focusing on emergency preparedness. The webinar was held on September 20 and included a review of the new KCER website, patient resources, and LAN Campaign materials. The webinar offered a great opportunity for KCER to highlight their current educational programs and materials to representatives from across the kidney community.

KCER held its annual national disaster exercise, Operation KCER NExUS 2016, on October 31, 2016. The 2016 drill was an operations-based functional exercise, which included actual reactions to the exercise scenario. The scenario was based on a 7.7 magnitude earthquake along the New Madrid Seismic Zone that caused major damage and destruction throughout the Central United States. All 18 Networks participated in the drill and actively tested their ability to respond to a major disaster. Exercise participants were highly engaged throughout the drill, and feedback during the hotwash was very favorable. Final evaluation results are still being tabulated.



Coordination of Response Efforts

KCER provides support and guidance to ESRD Networks, providers, and other members of the kidney community during actual emergencies and disasters. All response effects are tracked by the KCER team using the KCER Incident Report Tracking Tool to ensure that all appropriate response actions are carried out for each incident. 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 2016, KCER responded to a total of 32 events that resulted in 288 changes in facility status, including closures and altered schedules, and the team sent out over 125 incident reports related to the events.

During 2016, KCER responded to two major events, the Louisiana Flooding incident in August and Hurricane Matthew in October. On August 14, Network 13 formally requested assistance from KCER for the Louisiana flooding incident, which was a natural weather event that included extreme rainfall leading to major flooding. There were 70 ESRD facilities, treating 3,685 dialysis patients, impacted by the flooding. Six facilities sustained long-term damage during the event, and all patients had to be slotted in other facilities until repairs could be made.

Immediately upon receiving the request from Network 13, KCER activated its Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and coordinated, facilitated, and documented minutes for daily Emergency Status Calls that were held from August 15–23. KCER provided daily Incident Reports to CMS, with two being provided some days due to the frequency with which information changed. To date, KCER has submitted 34 Incident Reports related to the Louisiana flooding incident.

On October 5, Networks 6 and 7 formally requested assistance from KCER in preparation for Hurricane Matthew, which was projected to make landfall along the eastern coast of central Florida as a major hurricane. Widespread evacuations were ordered for millions of residents along the Southeastern coast, from south Florida continuing north into North Carolina. The record rainfall from Hurricane Matthew caused widespread flooding and evacuations in parts of North and South Carolina in the week following the storm's landfall. Network 7 had a total of 164 facilities with reported changes in their operational status due to Hurricane Matthew. Network 6 had a total of 90 facilities with reported changes in their operational status due to Hurricane Matthew.

Immediately upon receiving the request from Networks 6 and 7, KCER activated its EOP and coordinated, facilitated, and documented minutes for daily Emergency Status Calls that were held from October 5–14. KCER provided daily Incident Reports to CMS, with two being provided some days due to the frequency with which information changed. To date, KCER has submitted 27 Incident Reports related to the Hurricane Matthew incident.

Treatment and Medicine Recall Notifications

KCER has developed a process to monitor medical updates for treatment and medicine recall notices related to dialysis services. All KCER staff members are registered for the FDA MedWatch program to receive emails 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 ESRD community via the KCER Safety Alert distribution list, as well as posted on the KCER website and shared via social media. From May to November 2016, KCER issued 23 treatment and medication recall notifications to the ESRD community.



Social Media Outreach

KCER utilizes two social media accounts, Twitter and Facebook, as additional resources for communicating important preparedness information, as well as resources and education pertaining to current hot topics and events for members the kidney community. Posts are made throughout the week to share resources and information about topics ranging from disaster preparedness to current infectious diseases. The social media accounts also play a major role during disaster response and recovery. KCER uses social media during disasters as a tool to provide situational updates, current information, and relevant communications messaging to the kidney 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 during a major crisis or disaster. KCER will focus on continually enhancing engagement with the 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. KCER strives to improve technology related to situational awareness through continued integration of the HHS platform, GeoHealth. Additionally, KCER will continue to facilitate enhanced Network and community 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 during a major crisis or disaster.