



Dialysis & Nephrology DIGEST

A biweekly report by Benesch on the
Dialysis & Nephrology Industry

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October 20, 2020

Calendar of Events

OCTOBER 21, 2020

Forum MAC (Medical Advisory Council) Annual Meeting

Click [here](#) for more information.

OCTOBER 29, 2020

RPA Town Hall: Alternative Payment Models

Click [here](#) for more information.

OCTOBER 30, 2020

RPA Webinar: Insights into the Kidney Payment Models: What Nephrologists Need to Know

Click [here](#) for more information.

OCTOBER 31, 2020

American Society of Diagnostic and Interventional Nephrology (ASDIN)

Call for Interesting Cases for the 17th Annual ASDIN Scientific Meeting due 10/31. See [here](#) for details.

FEBRUARY 19–21, 2021

ASDIN 17th Annual Scientific Meeting

For information, please click [here](#).

ASDIN Announces Micro Research Grants

For information, please click [here](#).

ASDIN Accepting Applications Until December 31 for the \$25K Research Grant in Vascular Access

Click [here](#) for more information.



Please contact us if you would like to post information regarding your upcoming events or if you'd like to guest author an article for this newsletter.

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Nephrology Practice and Dialysis

OCTOBER 2, 2020

Possible settlement in class action involving ARA and stockholders

The U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey will consider a proposed settlement of class action case involving individuals who purchased common stock in American Renal Associates between Aug. 10, 2016 and Mar. 27, 2019. It's alleged the defendants made false statements concerning ARA's financial results, including that they were prepared in compliance with GAAP and the adequacy of their internal controls. If approved, the settlement would result in a payout of \$5,775,000, plus interest and minus attorney fees and other expenses, to the class. The hearing to discuss the proposed settlement is set for Jan. 12.

SOURCE: Law 360 (sub. req.)

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Nephrology Practice and Dialysis (cont'd)

OCTOBER 2, 2020

ARA being investigated for possible breach of fiduciary duty in relation to deal to be acquired by Nautic Partners

A plaintiff's bar law firm wants American Renal Associates' shareholders to join a class-action lawsuit stemming from the takeover of ARA by Nautic Partners. The law firm alleges ARA's improving financial outlook means shareholders could've gotten more than the \$11.50 for each share of common stock held. Ademi further contends the merger agreement limits competing bids by prohibiting solicitation of further suitors and imposes a termination penalty if ARA accepts a superior bid. Ademi states it's investigating ARA's board of directors to determine whether they're fulfilling their fiduciary duties to all shareholders and obtaining a fair and reasonable price for the company. Meanwhile, a second firm initiated its own investigation into the transaction over concerns ARA harmed stockholders by agreeing to the deal and whether all material facts were properly disclosed.

Source: Ademi

SEPTEMBER 18, 2020

Federal government expanding list of reimbursable expenses to encourage more living organ donations

A final rule from the HHS amends regulations in the National Organ Transplant Act to remove financial barriers to organ donation by expanding the scope of reimbursable expenses incurred by living organ donors to include lost wages as well as child-care and elder-care expenses incurred by a caregiver. HHS states it's committed to reducing the number of individuals on the organ transplant waiting list by increasing the number of organs available for transplant.

Related: Reimbursement of Travel and Subsistence Expenses Toward Living Organ Donation Program Eligibility Guidelines—**Federal Register**

SOURCE: Federal Register

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Nephrology Practice and Dialysis (cont'd)

SEPTEMBER 23, 2020

Research suggests VA payment scheme for community dialysis services improves care, lowers costs

A study led by the Center of Innovation for Health Services Research, Durham Veterans Affairs Health Care System, concluded Veterans' Affairs policies to standardize payment and establish national dialysis contracts increased the value of community dialysis care by reducing reimbursement without compromising access to care or survival. An analysis of Veterans who received VA-financed dialysis treatments in community-based dialysis facilities showed after the reforms were enacted in 2009-2010, there was a 44% reduction in the adjusted price per dialysis session and less variation in payments for dialysis. The study also found that while there was an increase in the number of facilities contracted with the VA to deliver community dialysis since the reforms were enacted, there was no change in either the quality or the one-year mortality rate for Veterans.

SOURCE: American Society of Nephrology

SEPTEMBER 24, 2020

Nephrology Associates subsidiary to provide CCM services to Minnesota kidney care practice

Nashville-based NephCare will provide chronic care management services to the nearly 1,000 patients of Kidney Specialists of Minnesota. Under the agreement, NephCare will be responsible for medication management, immunization/allergy reviews and psychosocial evaluations for patients living with chronic kidney disease. No financial terms were released.

SOURCE: Nephrology Associates

OCTOBER 1, 2020

Premera donates \$10M to non-profit kidney centers in Wash. state to support prevention initiatives

Northwest Kidney Centers and Puget Sound Kidney Centers, both in the Seattle area, will each receive \$5 million over the next three years for prevention and kidney health maintenance education programs. The focus is on measures that slow the progression of CKD in both the early and late stages. Premera Blue Cross says the funding will also support the centers' home dialysis initiatives, including education, up-front training and equipment costs.

SOURCE: Premera Blue Cross

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VAC, ASC and Office-Based Labs

OCTOBER 1, 2020

Report: COVID-19 highlighting need for OBLs and ASCs as hospitals remain overwhelmed

A report from startup community website Vator contends the pandemic has made it more difficult for patients with PAD and other comorbidities to access care in a timely fashion through traditional front-line care models. These patients are also more at risk from developing some of the more serious complications of COVID-19 if in a hospital setting as they're more likely to be exposed to the virus. The report says ASCs and especially OBLs provide better options for patients in need of revascularization because:

- Patients are less likely to contract viruses as they're not in the same buildings - or being treated near - those seeking treatment for COVID-19 and Influenza;
- Patients are less likely to be exposed to drug-resistant bacteria, including MRSA;
- OBLs are designed for timely limb salvage, so disruption of patient care is less likely;
- OBL physicians are incentivized to remain on the cutting-edge of new approaches, techniques and tools in order to save limbs in a minimally invasive way as they don't have bypass and amputation as a back-up treatment in-facility; and
- Physicians are incentivized to exhaust all efforts in the safest way possible to save limbs in a minimally invasive way as they would require ambulance for emergency transport.

The report cites a study that concluded endovascular procedures for PAD can be performed safely in rural outpatient settings with low complication rates, most of which don't require hospitalization. The researchers added OBLs could broaden access to specialist procedures in areas of socio-economic deprivation.

SOURCE: Vator

Other Interesting Industry News

SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

Medtronic to acquire Avenu Medical for undisclosed sum to strengthen PVA portfolio

No financial terms were disclosed but Ireland-based medical technology company Medtronic will acquire Avenu Medical. The Calif. company is focused on the endovascular creation of AV fistulae for patients with ESRD undergoing dialysis. Its Ellipsys VAS bears the CE Mark for distribution in the European Union and is cleared by the FDA. The deal is expected to close in Oct.

SOURCE: Medtronic

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Other Interesting Industry News (cont'd)

OCTOBER 6, 2020

Fresenius' expanded collaboration with Humana includes expanded availability of care coordination services, VBA

The agreement between Humana and Fresenius Medical Care North America goes into effect Jan. 1 and is in keeping with goals in the 21st Century Cures Act that enable people with ESRD to enroll in Medicare Advantage Plans. Among the initiatives in the revised partnership are:

- FMCNA provides specialized care coordination services for Humana members with CKD in three states: Ia., Ky., and N.C. The agreement expands the availability of these services to an additional 39 states. FMCNA's care coordination services include early detection of CKD to slow disease progression, medication reviews and regimen adherence guidance, behavioral health screenings, nutritional counseling, strategies for managing multiple comorbidities, home dialysis education, transplant education and palliative care. FMCNA partners with InterWell Health, a physician-led population health management company through its network of over 1,100 nephrologists across the country;
- Transitional Care Units are designed so people with kidney failure learn about treatment options available to them—including transplant and home dialysis - and are empowered in managing their own care. They may be either a space within a dialysis center or a standalone facility, offering education on topics like renal nutrition, medication adherence and vascular access care, assisting patients transitioning between modalities and supporting individuals returning to dialysis from transplant; and
- The expanded collaboration also improves the parties' existing clinic network contract, which provides eligible Humana Medicare Advantage and commercial members with ESRD access to dialysis at more than 2,600 centers of Fresenius Kidney Care. By implementing a value-based payment model for in-center and home dialysis services and at TCUs, as well as for CKD care coordination services, compensation will be based on meeting agreed-upon quality improvement and patient outcome goals and reducing overall costs to the system.

Value-based renal care is aligned with the objectives of CMS's recently-released End Stage Renal Disease Treatment Choices (ETC) Model, which encourages increased adoption of home dialysis and greater access to kidney transplants.

SOURCE: Humana

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Other Interesting Industry News (cont'd)

SEPTEMBER 27, 2020

Strive Health providing kidney disease care management services to Fla. practice

Denver-based specialized kidney care provider Strive Health is collaborating with seniors' care specialists Conviva Health Centers of Miami to offer kidney disease care management services in South Florida. The partners will integrate technology, infrastructure and expertise to deliver care to seniors with CKD and ESRD. The aim is to reduce hospitalizations and dialysis crash rates, increase home dialysis utilization, detect kidney disease earlier and connect patients to nephrologists and other specialists.

SOURCE: Strive Health

For more information regarding our nephrology and dialysis experience, or if you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please contact:

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