



Dialysis & Nephrology

A monthly report by Benesch on the
Dialysis & Nephrology Industry

Digest

In This Issue

PAGE 2

Calendar of Events

PAGE 6

Nephrology and Dialysis

ASN leaders meet with members of Congress to urge support for kidney health

2025 Updates to the KCC Model

Ninth Circuit revives lawsuit accusing drugmakers of overcharging on medication

PAGE 7

ASN health policy scholar testifies before the Health Subcommittee of the House Committee on Ways and Means

Vertex Pharmaceuticals' shares rise 8.3% following release of clinical data

Bayer to present Kerendia trial results to regulators

Baxter names Anita Zielinski interim CFO

PAGE 8

Biotechnology startup R1 Therapeutics launches with \$77.5M in Series A funding

Exercise programs can improve health outcomes in CKD patients

DaVita reports improvements in value-based kidney care initiatives

PAGE 9

VAC, ASC and Office-Based Labs

Healthy People 2030 initiative calls to reduce central venous catheter use

Fresenius Medical Care annual report emphasizes sustainability, patient experience

Surgery Partners acquires PVG

CMS Bets on the Long Game with 10-Year LEAD ACO Model

CMS Puts Specialists in the Game with LEAD

PAGE 10

LEAD vs. ACO REACH: What's Changing and Why the LEAD Model Matters for ACOs and Participating Providers

Calendar of Events

APRIL 25, 2026

Dialysis Vascular Access Training Workshop

Detroit, MI

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

MAY 20-22, 2026

Vascular Access Society of the Americas 2026 Symposium

Salt Lake City, UT

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

SEPTEMBER 25-26, 2026

RPA Fall Advocacy Weekend


Washington, D.C.

OCTOBER 21-25, 2026

ASN: Kidney Week 2026

Denver, CO

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



RPA eLEARNING

Keep your knowledge relevant with our suite of online courses.

RPA's eLearning Portal Platform

Keep your knowledge relevant with our suite of online courses developed for your continuous professional development. We have courses on the following topics:

- Billing and Coding
- Business Management
- Advocacy and Leadership
- Clinical Insights
- Nephrology Coverage
- Industry Awareness

Bookmark <https://www.pathlms.com/rpa> to stay up-to-date on frequently added content.



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

sdowning@beneschlaw.com

jgreis@beneschlaw.com

jcilek@beneschlaw.com

Benesch Healthcare Sixth Annual Nephrology and Dialysis Conference

Thursday, June 25, 2026

8:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.

Cocktail reception to follow

The Sheraton Grand Riverwalk Chicago

301 East North Water Street | Chicago

Please join us for this full-day conference addressing business and legal issues facing nephrology and dialysis providers. Hear from industry leaders discussing current and future trends in care delivery, business and payment models, and legal and regulatory issues.

Click [HERE](#) to register.

A block of guest rooms has been reserved for attendees at the Sheraton Grand for the nights of June 24 and June 25 at a rate of \$309/night + tax. To reserve a room at the negotiated price, please click [HERE](#) by June 3.

Please contact MEGAN THOMAS, Director of Client Services (mthomas@beneschlaw.com) for more information about this event as well as exhibitor and sponsorship opportunities.

If your organization is interested in Exhibitor Hall opportunities, please click [HERE](#).

*No CME or CLE available.

AGENDA

8:00–8:45

Registration and Breakfast in Exhibitor Hall

Presented by:  CorMedix Therapeutics

8:45–9:00

Opening Remarks

SCOTT DOWNING, Partner, *Benesch*

JASON GREIS, Partner, *Benesch*

9:00–9:30

Legislative Update from Capitol Hill

ROBERT BLASER, Director of Public Policy, *Renal Physicians Association*

9:30–10:15

Payor Recoupments Considerations: Playing both Offense and Defense

Moderator:

LAURI COOPER, Counsel, *Benesch*

Presenters:

HARRIETT WALL, President & CEO, *LW Consulting*

RACHEL HOLD-WEISS, Partner, *Benesch*

KATHRIN ZAKI, Senior Managing Associate, *Benesch*

10:15–10:30 **Break**

(continued on next page)

10:30–11:15

Succession Planning and Practice Governance

Moderator:

JAKE CILEK, Partner, *Benesch*

Presenters:

DAVID DOOER, CEO, *Innovative Renal Care*

FAHD AL-SAGHIR, MD, President, *Michigan Kidney Consultants*

GENNY CORDELL, CPA, Partner, *Beird Harris*

11:15–12:00

Artificial Intelligence in Kidney Care

Moderator:

NICHOLAS ADAMSON, Managing Associate, *Benesch*

Presenters:

ADAM WEINSTEIN, M.D., Chief Medical Information Officer, *DaVita Kidney Care*

MANDAR GORI, Chief Business Officer, *Vivance*

12:00–1:00

Lunch Lecture: New CMS Alternative Payment Models

TOM DUVALL, Division Director, *Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services*

Presented by:  **ONEPOINT**
Dialysis Cannula

1:00–1:45

Medicare Advantage: Impact on Patients and Payment Systems

Moderator:

CHRIS DEGRANDE, Partner, *Benesch*

Presenters:

EUGENE LIN, MD, MS, FASN, Assistant Professor, *University of Southern California*

ADAM WILK, PhD, Associate Professor, *Indiana University*
Fresenius Medical Care representative

VIRGINIA IRWIN-SCOTT, DO MBA, FAIM, FASN, CPE,
FACOI, National Director, Specialist Kidney Care, *ChenMed*

1:45–2:30

Cardio-Kidney Metabolic Health: Friend or Foe of a Nephrology Practice

Moderator:

JUAN MORADO, Partner, *Benesch*

Presenters:

SUNEEL UDANI, M.D., FASN, Consulting Physician,

Nephrology Associates of Northern Illinois and Indiana

KATHERINE KWON, M.D., FASN, President, *Lake Michigan Nephrology*

2:30–2:45 **Break**

2:45–3:30

Advanced Valuation Topics in Nephrology and Dialysis

Moderator:

SCOTT DOWNING, Partner, *Benesch*

Presenters:

JIM CONNORS III, CFA, ASA, Principal, *Pinnacle*

BRENT SHOCKLEY, CFA, CVA, Managing Director, *Marshall & Stevens*

MATTHEW PHILLIPS, Managing Director, *City Capital Advisors*

3:30–4:15

The Next Step: Developing Multi-Specialty Endovascular ASCs

Moderator:

JASON GREIS, Partner, *Benesch*

Presenters:

TERRY LITCHFIELD, President, *Access Solutions*

DEREK MITTLEIDER, M.D., President, *Vascular & Embolization Specialists*

DUSTIN GREENE, Chief Executive Officer, *Preferred Vascular Group*

PRABIR ROY-CHAUDHURY, M.D., Drs. Ronald & Katherine Falk Eminent Professor in Nephrology, Co-Director, *UNC Kidney Center*

4:15–5:00

ACOs, CINs and IPAs: The Best Choice for My Practice

Moderator:

NESKO RADOVIC, Partner, *Benesch*

Presenters:

GARY STELLUTI, Consultant, *Value-Based Healthcare*

PAUL SKLUZACEK, M.D., Chair, *Renal Healthcare Partners*

DAVID MAHVI, M.D., CEO, *Carolina Kidney Partners*

DAN ROBERTS, CEO, Sunflower ACO, *Value Services Management Group*

5:00–5:15

Impact of Trump Administration Immigration Policies on Physician Recruitment

MARGARITA KRNCJEVIC, Counsel, *Benesch*

5:15–6:30 **Cocktail Reception**

Presented by:  **SOMATUS**
More Lives, Better Lived.®

Please contact MEGAN THOMAS, Director of Client Services (mthomas@beneschlaw.com) for more information about this event as well as exhibitor and sponsorship opportunities.

Exhibitor and Sponsorship Opportunities

Benesch Healthcare Sixth Annual Nephrology and Dialysis Conference

Thursday, June 25, 2026

8:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.

Cocktail reception to follow

The Sheraton Grand Riverwalk Chicago

301 East North Water Street | Chicago

Conference Registration \$250
Please register and pay [HERE](#).

Break Sponsorships..... \$2000 (two slots)

- Logo
- Spotlight
- 4 free registrations
- List of attendees week before

To purchase a break sponsorship, please register and pay [HERE](#).

Exhibitor Space..... \$1000

- Logo
- Overview of company within handout
- 2 free conference registrations
- List of attendees week before

To purchase an exhibitor table, please register and pay [HERE](#).

Breakfast Sponsor \$3500

- Logo
- Spotlight with free plug
- 8 conference registrations
- List of attendees week before

To purchase a breakfast sponsorship, please register and pay [HERE](#).

Lunch Sponsor \$4000

- Logo
- Spotlight with free plug
- 8 conference registrations
- List of attendees week before

SOLD

To purchase a lunch sponsorship, please register and pay [HERE](#).

Cocktail Reception Sponsor..... \$6000

- Logo
- Spotlight with free plug
- Decorate space with sign
- 8 conference registrations
- List of attendees week before

SOLD

To purchase a cocktail reception sponsorship, please register and pay [HERE](#).

For more information or to sign up for an exhibitor space or sponsorship, please contact:

MEGAN THOMAS
Director of Client Services
mthomas@beneschlaw.com



Nephrology and Dialysis

MARCH 10, 2026

[ASN leaders meet with members of Congress to urge support for kidney health](#)

The American Society of Nephrology (ASN)'s advocacy delegation met with congressional delegations to request bipartisan support for critical kidney priorities, including providing an initial investment of \$1 billion in FY27 to support the research opportunities outlined in Transforming Kidney Health Research Report and advancing the Expanding Support for Living Donors Act, which would make donation a cost-neutral act, to support living kidney donors and remove financial barriers to donation.

Source: ASN

APRIL 1, 2026

[2025 Updates to the KCC Model](#)

Significant, Anomalous, and Highly Suspect Billing Activity

The Kidney Care Choices (KCC) Model, in accordance with Appendix B, Sections V.C.13, VI.F.15, and VII.C.13 of the KCC Model Participation Agreement (Agreement), is providing updated guidance on significant, anomalous, and highly suspect (SAHS) billing activity related to codes for performance year (PY) 2025. CMS has determined that six Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) codes related to urinary catheters, alginate dressings, and orthotics meet the definition of SAHS billing activity for calendar year (CY) 2025.

The KCC Model will exclude expenditures associated with HCPCS codes A4352, A4353, A6197, L0486, L1852, and L3916 with dates of service in CY 2025 from benchmarks, performance year expenditures, and the United States Per Capita Cost (USPCC) trend rates for the PY 2025 reconciliation reports.

Skin Substitute Billing Activity in the KCC Model

CMS continues to review and monitor claims for skin substitute products. KCC's design differs from the Shared Savings Program but is similar to ACO REACH's.

CMS estimates that skin substitutes comprised 2.2% of PY 2025 KCC Model expenditures for PY 2025. Accordingly, CMS will remove 90% of skin substitute billing activity for 254 HCPCS codes related to skin substitutes for PY 2025 from benchmarks, performance year expenditures, and the USPCC trend rates utilized for the retrospective trend adjustment (RTA).

In addition, CMS will hold KCEs harmless to any downside impacts from the removal of skin substitutes. KCEs will be offered a Participation Agreement Amendment in late April/early May 2026 to receive the adjustment for PY 2025 skin substitute billing activity.

Additionally, CMS is revising and expanding the reopening processes to allow KCEs to request a reopening when they believe potential improper claims payments have occurred. This will be included in the Participation Agreement Amendment that CMS will offer KCEs in late April/early May 2026.

Source: CMS

MARCH 17, 2026

[Ninth Circuit revives lawsuit accusing drugmakers of overcharging on medication](#)

The lawsuit, filed against AbbVie, AstraZeneca, Novartis and Sanofi, alleges they defrauded federal and state governments by overcharging for medications provided to low-income and uninsured patients under the Section 340B Drug Pricing Program. The program allows medical providers—including outpatient facilities such as vascular access centers—ambulatory surgery centers and office-based labs to purchase drugs at discounted prices, sometimes as low as \$0.01, known as “penny pricing,” when statutory ceiling prices fall below zero. Adventist Health System/West, a nonprofit with over 440 hospitals and clinics, claims years of overcharges led to inflated Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements, which ceased after the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services imposed civil fines in 2019.

Source: Reuters (sub. req.)

Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

MARCH 18, 2026

[ASN health policy scholar testifies before the Health Subcommittee of the House Committee on Ways and Means](#)

American Society of Nephrology (ASN) Health Policy Scholar Dr. Suzanne Watnick testified before the hearing on Improving Kidney Health through Better Prevention and Innovative Treatment. Watnick provided insights and answered questions on the current state of dialysis care in the U.S., specifically the slow pace of change in dialysis care, the challenges of Medicare reimbursement and potential solutions. Solutions provided included calling on the HHS Secretary to establish an Officer of Kidney Health and Transplantation, promoting screening for populations at risk for kidney diseases and ensuring patient access to therapies to manage and prevent kidney diseases.

Source: ASN



MARCH 11, 2026

[Vertex Pharmaceuticals' shares rise 8.3% following release of clinical data](#)

Vertex Pharmaceuticals saw its shares rise 8.3% on March 11, 2026, after releasing promising clinical data from its renal pipeline, particularly for Inaxaplin (VX-147), a small molecule inhibitor targeting APOL1-mediated kidney disease (AMKD), a severe genetic kidney disease. The company completed enrollment for the interim analysis cohort of its pivotal AMPLITUDE Phase 2/3 trial, with early data showing a sustained and significant reduction in proteinuria, a key marker of kidney damage. This development positions Vertex as a potential leader in the immunonephrology market and could transform care for patients with AMKD.

Source: The Chronicle Journal

MARCH 16, 2026

[Bayer to present Kerendia trial results to regulators](#)

Bayer's Kerendia (finerenone) achieved positive results in the phase 3 Find-CKD study for adults with chronic kidney disease (CKD) who do not have diabetes, meeting the primary endpoint by significantly reducing kidney function decline compared to placebo. Kerendia is already approved in the U.S. for CKD associated with Type 2 diabetes and certain types of heart failure. This outcome, measured by eGFR slope, suggests Kerendia may soon be available to a broader CKD population beyond those with Type 2 diabetes. Bayer plans to present detailed data at an upcoming medical conference and submit findings to regulators for potential label expansion.

Source: Fierce Pharma

Nephrology and Dialysis (cont'd)

MARCH 16, 2026

Baxter names Anita Zielinski interim CFO

Baxter International announced the departure of executive vice president and chief financial officer (CFO) Joel Grade, who will continue in an advisory capacity until April 30, 2026. Effective immediately, Zielinski, senior vice president, chief accounting officer and controller, will serve as interim CFO as the company fills the role. Zielinski joined Baxter in 2025 from Sysco Corporation, where she served as senior vice president and CFO.

Source: Baxter

MARCH 17, 2026

Biotechnology startup R1 Therapeutics launches with \$77.5M in Series A funding

R1 Therapeutics launched operations with a \$77.5 million Series A funding round and an exclusive license to develop and commercialize AP306, a drug for hyperphosphatemia in chronic kidney disease patients on dialysis.

Hyperphosphatemia is a complication that increases phosphorus levels to the point of weakening bones and damaging the heart. AP306, licensed from Chinese pharmaceutical firm Alebund Pharmaceuticals, is intended to address limitations of current treatments, which have changed little in 60 years and often require multiple pills with meals and cause stomach issues. The study is testing taking AP306 three times a day against a phosphate binder and found AP306 better at lowering phosphorus levels after 12 weeks. The company plans to begin a mid-stage trial in the first half of 2026, with data expected in the first half of next year, and, if successful, start late-stage development by the end of 2027.

Source: BioPharma Dive

MARCH 18, 2026

Exercise programs can improve health outcomes in CKD patients

Studies across multiple Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) populations found regular physical activity can improve cardiorespiratory fitness, muscle strength, functional capacity and health-related quality of life. Structured exercise programs can combat fatigue, reduced exercise tolerance and progressive muscle wasting, common contributors to CKD complications, including increased frailty, hospitalization and mortality. Programs in Canada, Germany, Portugal and Mexico found sustained exercise interventions supported by multidisciplinary teams in dialysis settings can improve physical capacity in CKD populations.

Source: Healio

MARCH 19, 2026

DaVita reports improvements in value-based kidney care initiatives

DaVita reported year-over-year improvements under the Comprehensive Kidney Care Contracting (CKCC) model, part of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' Kidney Care Choices initiative. The results show progress in enhancing care quality and reducing costs for patients with chronic kidney disease and end-stage kidney disease. DaVita's participation in the CKCC model highlights its ongoing focus on value-based care strategies to improve patient outcomes and manage costs more effectively within the dialysis marketplace.

Source: Gene Online

VAC, ASC and Office-Based Labs

MARCH 6, 2026

[Healthy People 2030 initiative calls to reduce central venous catheter use](#)

The Healthy People 2030 initiative highlighted a critical issue in dialysis care: the high rate of central venous catheter use for vascular access, which is associated with worse patient outcomes. Despite arteriovenous fistula having better outcomes, 85% of new dialysis patients in the U.S. start with a catheter. Post-pandemic data from the United States Renal Data System show catheter rates have increased from 16% to over 22%. Healthy People 2030's recommendations include improving Medicare reimbursements to dialysis vascular access centers, updating policy to recognize vascular access as a clinical priority and prioritizing infection control to reduce deaths from catheter-related infections and sepsis.

Source: Healio

MARCH 12, 2026

[Fresenius Medical Care annual report emphasizes sustainability, patient experience](#)

Highlights from the Power of Care [report](#) include:

- Organic revenue growth of 8% at constant currency in 2025 and a 27% increase in operating income, excluding special items;
- The expansion of the FME25 program, creating FME25+;
- The organization's global Patient Net Promoter Score increased from 72 to 73;
- A 29% reduction in Scope-1 and market-based Scope-2 emissions compared to 2020; and
- Higher employee engagement and an expansion of training programs.

Source: Fresenius Medical Care

MARCH 5, 2026

[Surgery Partners acquires PVG](#)

Surgery Partners, a U.S. operator of ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs), acquired Preferred Vascular Group (PVG), which operates eight ASCs in Georgia and Ohio focused on specialty dialysis access procedures. PVG's management will continue to lead the new entity, now backed by Surgery Partners. Surgery Partners now supports more than 200 centers across 33 states, expanding its footprint in the vascular access and ASC sector.

Source: Becker's ASC Review

APRIL 14, 2026

[CMS Bets on the Long Game with 10-Year LEAD ACO Model](#)

The 10-year LEAD ACO model demonstrates CMS's commitment to long-term value-based care. The model is designed to promote stability, foster innovation and support ongoing improvements in quality and cost-effectiveness for providers and organizations.

Source: Benesch

APRIL 15, 2026

[CMS Puts Specialists in the Game with LEAD](#)

CMS's LEAD model expands value-based care by allowing specialists to participate more fully. This shift encourages greater collaboration among providers and aims to improve patient outcomes by integrating specialists into accountable care frameworks.

Source: Benesch

VAC, ASC and Office-Based Labs (cont'd)

APRIL 16, 2026

[LEAD vs. ACO REACH: What's Changing and Why the LEAD Model Matters for ACOs and Participating Providers](#)

The new LEAD model introduces significant changes from the outgoing ACO REACH program, focusing on improved care coordination, increased provider participation and enhanced health equity. These updates are poised to impact accountable care organizations and participating providers in meaningful ways.

Source: Benesch

Advertise with Us!

To advertise in Benesch's
Dialysis & Nephrology Digest, please contact:
Sarah Ross at sross@beneschlaw.com
T 216.363.6178

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

Jake Cilek

jcilek@beneschlaw.com

T 312.624.6363

Scott Downing

sdowning@beneschlaw.com

T 312.624.6326

Jason Greis

jgreis@beneschlaw.com

T 312.624.6412