



Dialysis Facility Compare Handbook

Contents

I.	Introduction	2
	About Dialysis Facility Compare (DFC)	2
	DFC Goals and Target Audiences	2
II.	Website Overview	3
	Available on DFC	3
	Website Navigation	3
III.	Measures Displayed on Dialysis Facility Compare	5
	DFC Measures	5
	List of Measures	7
IV.	Data and Measure Updates	10
	Data Refresh Schedule	10
	Outreach around data and measure updates	11
V.	DFC Data	11
	Data Available on DialysisData.org	11
	Data Available on Data.Medicare.gov	11
VI.	Acronyms	11



I. Introduction

About Dialysis Facility Compare (DFC)

The Dialysis Facility Compare (DFC) website is hosted by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and has information about dialysis clinics and the care they provide. DFC's legislative authority to collect and report data comes from the Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

A key feature of the DFC website is the Quality of Patient Care Star Rating, which provides a simple summary of the quality of care a dialysis clinic provides. CMS developed the DFC Quality of Patient Care Star Ratings in response to a national call for greater transparency in how the agency measures the quality of care for patients with kidney disease and consumers' desire to use health care quality data to make informed decisions. The DFC Quality of Patient Care Star Ratings were implemented in 2015.

The DFC website also includes results from patient experience surveys collected through the In-Center Hemodialysis (ICH) Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey. Results from the survey are displayed as 1 to 5 stars based on how patients rated their facility.

The following initiatives were the basis for the development of the DFC Quality of Patient Care Star Ratings:

- Affordable Care Act
- National Quality Strategy
- Obama Administration's Digital Government Strategy

DFC Goals and Target Audiences

The goal of the Dialysis Facility Compare website is to give all members of the kidney disease community access to up-to-date information about dialysis care. The information on DFC can be used by patients, researchers, and health care providers:

- Patients find clinics and compare quality of care using a star rating
- Health care researchers study end-stage renal disease dialysis patient outcomes and facility care
- Dialysis clinic staff see where they can improve quality of care

CMS regularly updates the DFC website with new information and works closely with the kidney disease community to make sure the quality measures reported on the website reflect best practices for care for ESRD patients on dialysis.



CMS also regularly meets with members of the kidney disease community in numerous ways; patient focus groups, conference calls, webinars, and Technical Expert Panels (TEPs). CMS always welcomes comments on our work with the kidney disease community. Please send your comments to dialysisdata@umich.edu.

II. Website Overview

Available on DFC

Users can search the DFC website for dialysis clinics by location or name of facility. Available information about clinics includes:

- Star rating for quality of patient care
- Star rating for patient experience
- Clinical quality measure results
- Patient survey results, shown next to state and national averages
- Distance from your home
- Hours (whether you can receive treatments after 5 pm)
- Treatments offered
- Profit/nonprofit status and corporate name
- Date of Medicare certification

Website Navigation

The DFC home page features a menu bar with the following tabs:

- [About Dialysis Facility Compare](#)
- [About the Data](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Help](#)

Tab: About Dialysis Facility Compare

Visitors can use this tab to learn how the DFC website uses star ratings, quality measures, and patient survey results to answer questions about:

- How well dialysis centers care for their patients
- How often dialysis centers follow best practices and how effective they are at keeping patients healthy
- How patients feel about their experience at dialysis centers



The *About Dialysis Facility Compare* tab also includes details about data on the DFC website and how to use it, including:

- Star ratings for dialysis centers and what they mean
- Survey of patients' experiences star ratings
- Basic information about dialysis facilities and their services
- Quality of patient care at different dialysis centers

Tab: About the Data

The *About the Data* tab highlights the types and sources of data available on the DFC website.

The data on the DFC website come from the following sources:

- National Claims History Standard Analytical Files (NCH SAFs)
 - o These Medicare claims contain information collected by CMS.
 - o Data from this source is used on the DFC website to calculate quality of patient care measures and Star Ratings.
- Consolidated Renal Operations in a Web-enabled Network (CROWN)
 - o CROWN includes Renal Management Information System (REMIS) and Program Management and Medical Information System (PMMIS) data.
 - o CROWNWeb is a web-based data collection system implemented as part of CROWN in May 2012. It includes data from U.S. dialysis facilities for almost all ESRD dialysis patients in the U.S.
 - o Data from this source is used on the DFC website to calculate quality of patient care measures and Star Ratings.
- In-Center Hemodialysis Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (ICH CAHPS) Survey
 - o CMS and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) developed the ICH CAHPS Survey to provide a standardized survey to gather patient perspectives on the care received at dialysis facilities. The ICH CAHPS Survey is administered twice a year.
 - o Data from this source is used on the DFC website to calculate the survey of patients' experiences of care measures and the patients' experiences star ratings.
- National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN)
 - o NHSN is the nation's most widely-used health care-associated infection tracking system.
 - o Data from this source is used on the DFC website to calculate a quality of patient care measure.

About the Data also includes details on the methodologies used to calculate the quality of care measures, the quality of patient care star ratings, survey of patients' experiences, and survey of patients' experiences star ratings.



Tab: Resources

The *Resources* tab features information for patients and caregivers about kidney disease and dialysis. This includes a dialysis facility checklist to help dialysis patients choose a clinic. The *Resources* tab also includes links to helpful websites about kidney disease, dialysis, transplants, and Medicare resources. In addition, the tab includes a list of dialysis patient rights and responsibilities, and a Q&A section with contact information for the DFC team.

Tab: Help

The *Help* tab provides step-by-step instructions with screenshots on how to use the DFC website search function.

III. Measures Displayed on Dialysis Facility Compare

DFC Measures

Dialysis Facility Compare's quality measures are the main way the DFC website tracks the quality of care in dialysis facilities. DFC measures are based on a set of criteria and summarize how well a dialysis facility:

- Avoids unnecessary transfusions
- Prevents bloodstream infections
- Removes waste from the blood
- Maintains nutritional status
- Uses the most effective access to the bloodstream
- Keeps a patient's minerals in balance
- Avoids hospitalizations, re-admissions, and deaths

State and national averages are shown next to a facility's averages as a reference for how well the facility cares for its patients. The scores a facility receives on the following DFC measures are combined into the Quality of Patient Care Star Rating.

- Standardized Transfusion Ratio
- Standardized Mortality Ratio
- Standardized Hospitalization Ratio
- Standardized Readmission Ratio
- Total Kt/V Measure:
 - o Delivered Dose of Hemodialysis Above Minimum
 - o Minimum spKt/V for Pediatric Hemodialysis Patients
 - o Delivered Dose of Peritoneal Dialysis Above Minimum
 - o Pediatric Peritoneal Dialysis Adequacy: Achievement of Target Kt/V
- Hemodialysis Vascular Access: Standardized Fistula Rate
- Hemodialysis Vascular Access: Long-Term Catheter Rate
- Proportion of Patients with Hypercalcemia



DFC measures were created by CMS working together with health care providers, dialysis facilities and their staff, patients, and measure experts. The measures give a summary of the quality of care by focusing on the most important parts of dialysis treatments.

The measures are reviewed by stakeholders and other experts on a regular basis. Dialysis providers, patients, caregivers, and other experts also provide important input on new measures.



List of Measures

Quality of patient care star rating

- Data source: Medicare claims and the [CMS/ESRD Networks integrated information system](#)
- Date updated on this website: Annually (October)
- Data collection period: 1/1/2015 - 12/31/2018

Survey of patients' experiences star rating

- Data source: [In-Center Hemodialysis Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems \(ICH CAHPS®\) Survey](#)
- Date updated on this website: Semi-annually
- Data collection period: 4/20/2018 - 1/11/2019

Survey of patients' experiences

- Data source: [In-Center Hemodialysis Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems \(ICH CAHPS®\) Survey](#)
- Technical measure titles:
 - Nephrologists' Communication and Caring
 - Quality of Dialysis Center Care and Operations
 - Providing Information to Patients
 - Rating of kidney doctors
 - Rating of dialysis center staff
 - Rating of dialysis center
- Date updated on this website: Semi-annually
- Data collection period: 4/20/2018 - 1/11/2019

Data collection for the Spring Survey conducted in each year takes place between April and July. Data collection for the Fall Survey conducted each year takes place between November and January. The patient survey results are not included in the quality of patient care star rating; a separate star rating is calculated for these survey measures.

Quality of patient care measures

Avoiding unnecessary transfusions (anemia management)

Rate of transfusions

- Data source: Medicare claims and the [CMS/ESRD Networks integrated information system](#)
- Technical measure title: Standardized transfusion rate
- Date updated on this website: Annually (October)



- Data collection period: 1/1/2018 - 12/31/2018

Preventing bloodstream infections

Standardized infection ratio classification category

- Data source: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) collects data from dialysis facilities via the [National Healthcare Safety Network \(NHSN\) tool](#)
- Technical measure title: Bloodstream standardized infection ratio
- Date updated on this website: Annually (October)
- Data collection period: 1/1/2018 - 12/31/2018

Removing waste from blood (dialysis adequacy) and nutritional status

Adult patients who had enough wastes removed from their blood during hemodialysis

- Data source: [CROWNWeb system](#)
- Technical measure title: Percentage of adult hemodialysis patients who had a Kt/V greater than or equal to 1.2
- Date updated on this website: Quarterly
- Data collection period: 1/1/2018 - 12/31/2018

Adult patients who had enough wastes removed from their blood during peritoneal dialysis

- Data source: [CROWNWeb system](#)
- Technical measure title: Percentage of adult peritoneal dialysis patients who had a Kt/V greater than or equal to 1.7
- Date updated on this website: Quarterly
- Data collection period: 1/1/2018 - 12/31/2018

Children who had enough wastes removed from their blood during hemodialysis

- Data source: [CROWNWeb system](#)
- Technical measure title: Percentage of pediatric hemodialysis patients who had a Kt/V greater than or equal to 1.2
- Date updated on this website: Quarterly
- Data collection period: 1/1/2018 - 12/31/2018

Children who had enough wastes removed from their blood during peritoneal dialysis

- Data source: [CROWNWeb system](#)
- Technical measure title: Percentage of pediatric peritoneal patients who had a Kt/V greater than or equal to 1.8
- Date updated on this website: Quarterly



- Data collection period: 1/1/2018 - 12/31/2018

Children who had a monthly normalized protein catabolic rate (nPCR) measured during in-center hemodialysis

- Data source: [CROWNWeb system](#)
- Technical measure title: Percentage of patient months of pediatric in-center hemodialysis patients with documented monthly nPCR measurements
- Date updated on this website: Quarterly
- Data collection period: 1/1/2018 - 12/31/2018

Using the most effective access to the bloodstream (vascular access)

Adult patients who received treatment through an arteriovenous fistula

- Data source: [CROWNWeb system](#)
- Technical measure title: Standardized Fistula Rate
- Date updated on this website: Quarterly
- Data collection period: 1/1/2018 - 12/31/2018

Adult patients who had a catheter (tube) left in a vein for at least 3 consecutive complete months, for their regular hemodialysis treatments

- Data source: [CROWNWeb system](#)
- Technical measure title: Long Term Catheter rate
- Date updated on this website: Quarterly
- Data collection period: 1/1/2018 - 12/31/2018

Keeping a patient's mineral levels in balance (mineral & bone disorder)

Adult patients who had too much calcium in their blood

- Data source: [CROWNWeb system](#)
- Technical measure title: Percentage of adult patients who had an average calcium over the past three months greater than 10.2 mg/dL (hypercalcemia)
- Date updated on this website: Quarterly
- Data collection period: 1/1/2018 - 12/31/2018

Avoiding hospitalizations & deaths

Frequency of hospital admission

- Data source: Medicare claims and the [CMS/ESRD Networks integrated information system](#)
- Technical measure title: Standardized hospitalization rate



- Date updated on this website: Annually (October)
- Data collection period: 1/1/2018 - 12/31/2018

Frequency of hospital readmission

- Data source: Medicare claims and the [CMS/ESRD Networks integrated information system](#)
- Technical measure title: Standardized readmission rate
- Date updated on this website: Annually (October)
- Data collection period: 1/1/2018 - 12/31/2018

Frequency of patient death

- Data source: Medicare claims and the [CMS/ESRD Networks integrated information system](#)
- Technical measure title: Standardized mortality rate
- Date updated on this website: Annually (October)
- Data collection period: 1/1/2015 - 12/31/2018

IV. Data and Measure Updates

Data Update Schedule

Data used to calculate measures on the DFC website are updated, depending on the measure, in:

- January (with a 15-day preview period in November)
- April (with a 15-day preview period in February)
- July (with a 15-day preview period in May)
- October (with a 32-day preview period in July-August)

Depending on where the data come from, certain measures are updated once a year in October, or twice a year in October and April, or four times a year. The measures table above includes the “date updated” and “data collection period” for each measure.

CMS shows a preview of updated data to dialysis facilities before data are available to the public on DFC. Facilities can contact CMS during the preview period with any questions about their data.

The ICH CAHPS Survey is administered twice a year, and CMS refreshes the data on DFC twice a year.



Outreach around data and measure updates

The DFC team announces data and measure refreshes through eBlast emails, through national conference calls and webinars, and on the DFC website itself. Past webinar materials are posted on the [ESRD General Information page](#).

V. DFC Data

Data Available on DialysisData.org

The quarterly DFC Reports are provided to facilities and ESRD networks. Dialysis facilities are encouraged to submit comments during the comment period by logging into the secure site on DialysisData.org if they have questions or concerns regarding their reports. A sample report is available for the public and may be downloaded from the Methodology sections of DialysisData.org.

Data Available on Data.Medicare.gov

[Data.Medicare.gov](#) hosts the official datasets used by the DFC website. The data are available for download by anyone, and can be used to compare quality of care and patient experience results provided by Medicare-certified dialysis facilities nationwide.

VI. Acronyms

CMS	Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
DFC	Dialysis Facility Compare
ESRD	End-Stage Renal Disease
ICH CAHPS	In-Center Hemodialysis Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems
TEP	Technical Expert Panel
CROWN	Consolidated Renal Operations in a Web-enabled Network

###