



Council of Nephrology Social Workers

Quality of Life Assessment Tools

The Council of Nephrology Social Workers (CNSW) has summarized below the various sources of information regarding the new Conditions for Coverage requirement for a “standardized mental and physical assessment tool.” The sources cited include: the specific standard in the Conditions for Coverage for End-stage Renal Disease Facilities published April 15, 2008, CMS preamble comments regarding the standardized assessment, and the newly released Clinical Performance Measures (CPM). Dialysis facilities are encouraged to reference all three sources of information in order to effectively implement or adjust their use of a standardized assessment. The document also includes a reference to an online tool being development by the Medical Education Institute, Inc. (MEI)/Life Options.

Conditions for Coverage – Subpart C Patient Care / Patient Plan of Care 494.90(a)(6)

Psychosocial status:

The interdisciplinary team must provide the necessary monitoring and social work interventions. These include counseling services and referrals for other social services, to assist the patient in achieving and sustaining an appropriate psychosocial status as measured by a standardized mental and physical assessment tool chosen by the social worker, at regular intervals, or more frequently on an as-needed basis.

Supplementary Information - Section II / Summary of the Proposed Provisions and Response to Comments on the February 4, 2005 Proposed Rule

CMS Response:

In response to the large number of comments, and in light of current academic research supporting social service interventions to improve patient care, we are adding a social services component, called “psychosocial status” to the plan of care requirements at 494.90(a)(6). We are requiring that a standardized tool, chosen by the social worker, be used to monitor patient status, and that counseling be provided and referrals be made as appropriate.

The standardized tool should be a professionally accepted, valid, reliable tool, such as the SF-36, and should relate to the patient’s functional health and well-being. The tool must be used as a monitoring aid that assists in determining the patient’s psychosocial status. The SF-36 model uses metrics that measure physical health as related to functional level and presence of pain, and mental health as related to social functioning, emotional and mental health. Reliability and validity studies have been performed for this instrument. More information about SF-36 may be found in numerous articles or on the web at www.sf-36.org/tools/sf36.shtml. The SF-12 survey form was derived from the SF-36 form and scales the 36 question survey down to a 1-page, 2-minute version. However, we are not specifying which tool must be used in order to allow flexibility and to limit the amount of burden. The choice of which standardized tool to use is best left to the facility social worker.

Phase III ESRD Clinical Performance Measures in effect April 1, 2008

Assessment of Health-related Quality of Life (Physical & Mental Functioning) – Facility Level:

Percentage of dialysis patients who receive a quality of life assessment using the **KDQOL-36** (36 question survey that assesses patients’ functioning and well-being) at least once per year.

You can read about CPMs and download the latest table of them from:
<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/CPMProject/>.

Discussion

Based on the above requirements in the CfC and CPMs, a facility that uses another survey to measure physical and mental functioning will *still* need to administer the **KDQOL-36** at least once per year. The **KDQOL-36** includes physical & mental functioning *and* kidney-specific information, which may make it more acceptable to your patients than the generic SF-36.

Don't panic! The Medical Education Institute, Inc. (MEI)/Life Options (www.lifeoptions.org) is designing an **online version of the KDQOL-36** for social workers to gain practice with the tool, see the questions, subscales, norms, and get tips for how to improve low scores. A subsequent project planned for late winter will let facilities score patient *and* facility data and track it on your center's computer. Both tools will be offered for free on www.lifeoptions.org.

The CMS clinical performance measures state that the **KDQOL-36** must be administered annually with some limited situations where it is not required, such as for those patients at the facility <90 days, those <18 years old, those with cognitive impairments, those who speak languages for which there is no translation, and those who refuse: www.qualityforum.org/projects/ongoing/esrd/index.asp (from the menu on the left side of the page, choose "Specifications for Endorsed Measures." The document will download to your computer).

The Conditions for Coverage for End-stage Renal Disease Facilities were published April 15, 2008 by the Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

To go into effect **October 14, 2008**

You can find the entire conditions for coverage at:

<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/08-1102.pdf>

This packet was put together by the Council of Nephrology Social Workers (CNSW) to help inform and educate the kidney community about the psychosocial aspects of the new conditions. The implementation and interpretation of the new Conditions for Coverage for End-stage Renal Disease Facilities is anticipated to be a dynamic process. This document reflects the information available to the kidney community as of its version date. Please confirm with CNSW whether further information, resources, or guidance has been provided on this subject. Information provided by CNSW is not intended to establish or replace policies and procedures provided by dialysis providers to their facilities. Please check with your dialysis facility management before implementing any information provided here.

**To best stay informed and up-to-date about the new conditions,
we encourage you to be a national member of CNSW-
Go to www.kidney.org, or Call (800) 622-9010 to join today!
<http://www.kidney.org/professionals/pdf/cnswform.pdf>**