



August 31, 2009

Dr. Barry Straube, Director and Chief Clinical Officer
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Department of Health and Human Services
7500 Security Boulevard Room S3-25-25
Mail Stop S3-02-01
Baltimore, MD 21244

Re: Proposed Rule on the reimbursement structure for the bundling of dialysis services

Dear Dr. Straube,

The American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP), American Kidney Fund (AKF), Dialysis Patient Citizens (DPC), Medical Education Institute (MEI), National Kidney Foundation (NKF), and the Renal Support Network (RSN) would like to request an ESRD Open Door Forum to be held live and via teleconference to provide patients with the opportunity to engage in dialogue with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) about the soon to be released proposed rule on the ESRD “bundle”. As organizations dedicated to improving quality kidney care for patients, we believe it is important patients have the opportunity to discuss, directly with policy makers, changes that impact their dialysis care.

We believe holding a CMS ESRD Open Door Forum to discuss the impact of the ESRD “bundle” will provide an opportunity for CMS to explain their proposed rule while also allowing patient stakeholders to have a voice within the agency by engaging in valuable discussions. Active dialogue with patients is a mutually beneficial way to create a final rule that will help garner the support of the patient community, promote the best and most efficient care for patients, and help ensure a smooth transition.

We, as representatives of patients with ESRD nationwide, encourage adequate notification of the Open Door Forum and will lead the charge to ensure the information about the meeting is disseminated and that a wide representation of dialysis patients are able to participate in the forum live or by teleconference. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Roberta Wager, RN, MSN

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Cc: Daniel Schreiner, Ombudsman