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Partnership shifts the burden of disjointed care from patients to providers

Independence Kidney Care Alliance launches in Pennsylvania and Ohio

(Pittsburgh, Pa.) In an effort to demonstrate that the delivery of kidney care can be improved from the patient perspective and to reduce the overall cost of care for ESRD beneficiaries, Dialysis Clinic, Inc. (DCI), has joined forces with a select group of community health partners to establish the Independence Kidney Care Alliance, an End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Seamless Care Organization (ESCO) in Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio.

"I chose to become involved in the Independence Kidney Care Alliance ESCO because I feel there is a strong unmet need to integrate the care of the ESRD patient amongst their many providers," said Amit Nahata, MD. "I feel the Independence Kidney Care Alliance ESCO might be a solution to the current disjointed care they are receiving."

The Independence Kidney Care Alliance (IKCA) is a partnership among the following health care providers:

- Dialysis Clinic, Inc.
- Sung and Ward, Inc.
- University of Pittsburgh Physicians
- UPMC Community Medicine, Inc.
- Advanced Nephrology Associates, PC
- Home Nursing Agency & Visiting Nurse Association
- Amit Nahata, MD
- Jessie Ganjoo, MD
- Joseph DeJonckheere, MD
- Ashok Chaddah, MD
- Brian Spar, MD

"The Independence Kidney Care Alliance shifts the burden of care coordination from the patient to the nephrologists, other providers, and the dialysis facilities," said Jessie Ganjoo, MD. "Thus, the patient can really focus on other issues which are more important to him or her. It also improves the partnership between the patient and the provider."

Under the new Comprehensive End-Stage Renal Disease Care (CEC) Model, each Participant in the Independence Kidney Care Alliance will provide individually tailored care in order to improve health outcomes for aligned ESRD patients in the region.

Patients who are treated in the DCI facilities participating in the ESCO and who have Medicare Fee-for-Service as primary insurance are automatically aligned to the Independence Kidney Care Alliance. Notices will be mailed to patients by January 31, 2017, informing them of the new program.

The benefits of being in the Independence Kidney Care Alliance for patients include:

- A dedicated care coordinator who assists with the coordination of care for patients as they move from one healthcare setting to the next
- Planning for vascular access placement and ongoing care
- Assistance in finding community-based services
- Medication therapy management services delivered through a specialized pharmacy program, REACH MTM
- Various modalities of education that are tailored to meet the patient's needs

Each member of the Independence Kidney Care Alliance was asked to participate in the ESCO in order to provide a well-rounded network of support for patients. Participants in the IKCA that are designated as ESCO owners are financially responsible for all care provided to patients in the ESCO program, not just dialysis care or care specifically related to a patient's kidney disease. The ESCO gives providers a unique opportunity to take ownership of both the clinical and financial outcomes of each ESRD patient.

Approximately 400 Medicare ESRD beneficiaries will be served by the Independence Kidney Care Alliance. DCI dialysis patients will not experience a change in their health insurance coverage or benefit options.

Medicare patients from the following Dialysis Clinic, Inc., locations will be aligned to the Independence City Kidney Care Alliance:

- DCI – Banksville
- DCI – Chesnut Ridge
- DCI – East Liverpool
- DCI – Five Points
- DCI – Grove City
- DCI – Hempfield
- DCI – Indiana
- DCI – Mount Pleasant
- DCI – North Hills
- DCI – North Versailles
- DCI – Oakland
- DCI – Punxsutawney
- DCI – Seven Fields
- DCI – Shenango Valley
- DCI – Stubenville
- DCI – Washington
- DCI – Wilkinsburg

More information about the program can be found at <http://www.independencekidneycare.com/>

More information about the CEC Initiative can be found at:
<http://innovation.cms.gov/initiatives/comprehensive-ESRD-care/>

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