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**Successful Development of a Hospital-based Apheresis Program
Utilizing Hemodialysis Nurses**

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Plasmapheresis is a therapy which removes plasma from the patient and replaces the removed plasma with albumin, crystalloid, donor plasma, or a combination of these fluids. In 2011, over 1000 adult plasma exchanges were completed at our hospital. The procedure was done under a contract with a third party vendor with a mix of RNs and LPNs.

In August 2011, administration made the decision to bring the program in-house and manage it through the hemodialysis unit. This allowed us to provide the service with an all RN staff and eliminated the contract costs associated with the third party vendor.

A vendor fair was held for the hemodialysis nursing staff. Three centrifugal apheresis machines were purchased. The decision to buy these machines was based on patient safety and ease of operation.

Twenty-six hemodialysis RNs were cross-trained to do plasma exchange. Their training consisted of a 20 hour course for 14 nurses given by a certified apheresis nurse. An 8 hour course was completed by the remaining nurses. A minimum of 40 hours of clinical training with a certified nephrology nurse preceptor was completed by all. On-site observation by a certified apheresis nurse was provided through the first week of go-live.

On January 1, 2012 the adult plasma exchange program officially began and has been well received by the nurses and patients. We are presently averaging slightly over 110 treatments per month, which places us among one of the busiest centers in the US.

This program started as an innovative idea by the adult dialysis management team and has proven to be an effective, productive, and fiscally sound endeavor which has provided new skills for the acute dialysis nurses. As we continue to grow our program, we will strive to provide the best patient outcomes. Hopefully, what we have accomplished can serve as a template for other hospital-based acute dialysis programs.

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