Proposed Rule Talking Points: Clinicians

Note: Use this information as a guideline when speaking with your legislators regarding this issue. Remember to personalize your message!

Message 1: Nephrology nurses are extremely concerned about the CMS proposed rule on ESRD, a proposal that would seriously undermine the current system if implemented.

• I am a nephrology nurse from [city, state] and I’m [calling] because I am deeply troubled and angered by the just published proposed rule on the end-stage renal disease program.

• This proposed rule goes too far. I believe that if finalized, it will undercut a crucial part of segment of the health care system, which is a lifeline for Medicare beneficiaries who depend on dialysis to live.

• The proposed rule would cut an unprecedented 12 percent out of the payment system at a time when Medicare funding for dialysis is already being pushed down by previously enacted cuts. Cuts of the magnitude outlined in the proposed rule will be detrimental to our patients.

Message 2: My patients are among the most vulnerable in America’s health care system. Their kidneys have failed, and my patients rely on dialysis to live. The Medicare ESRD program needs to be stable to ensure that providers consistently deliver the quality care patients need.

• More than 80 percent of dialysis patients rely on Medicare for their treatments, meaning that any cuts by the federal government have an enormous impact on this important patient population. This is reason enough for CMS to exercise caution when changing the ESRD payment system.

• Half of all dialysis patients suffer from high blood pressure, and nearly 2/3 suffer from diabetes. That means clinicians and staff face a continual challenge to not only administer dialysis, but also monitor these patients’ multiple comorbidities and balance competing conditions.

• For clinics in urban and rural areas with high Medicare populations, the impact of these deep cuts could be significant. Some patients could be at risk of losing access to the high quality care they receive today. We cannot and should not put some of our most fragile patients in such a situation.

Message 3: As a Member of Congress, you must ensure that Medicare reimbursement for dialysis is adequate to cover the cost of care, and we urge you to tell CMS the same.