

An Era of Transformation

We are in a transformative era in kidney care and nephrology history. The *Advancing American Kidney Health* initiative will change kidney care as we currently know it, as it seeks to expand treatment options for patients with kidney disease while reducing health care costs (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS], 2019).

In September 2019, the American Nephrology Nurses Association (ANNA) provided formal comments to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) on the "Specialty Care Models to Improve Quality of Care and Reduce Expenditures (CMS-5527-P; 84 Fed. Reg. 138, 2019)" (Kear, 2019). This rule proposes to implement two mandatory Medicare payments models – the End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Treatment Choices Model (ETC Model) and the Radiation Oncology Model (RO Model). In this letter of comments to CMS, ANNA indicated support of the stated goals of the *Advancing American Kidney Health* initiative that includes efforts to prevent, detect, and slow the progression of kidney disease; provide patients who have kidney disease with more options for treatment; and increase the availability of organs for transplant costs (DHHS, 2019). ANNA indicated the desire to play an active role in the development of the policies that will be implemented to achieve these objectives.

Additionally, ANNA's response to CMS relating to the ETC Model included four main comments on the proposed rule possessing these themes:

- Ensuring an adequate and qualified nursing workforce.
- Recruiting and retaining qualified nephrology nurses.
- Training, education, and preparation for nurses, patients, and caregivers.
- ANNA's requested actions on the ETC Model.

Details on these themes, ANNA's currently position and the state of nephrology nursing, the expertise nephrology nurses contribute to the quality care of patients with kidney disease, and suggestions that support successful implementation can be found in the letter following this article or on the ANNA website and on pages 477-481 in this issue of the journal.

The Ad Hoc group providing comments on behalf of ANNA to CMS on the ETC Model had a grasp on the current state of care delivery as nephrology nurses, but we could only speculate on the future impact and implications of this proposed rule. There are other areas yet to be developed and determined that are beyond our cur-



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rent understanding due to future unknown changes.

We are in an era of transformation. Transformation is a process of change, and in its truest definition, a human transformative experience often involves a dilemma or event that provides an opportunity for exploration and clarification (Mezirow, 1997). That is exactly our current position; we are in a state of exploration and opportunity. There is no doubt this may come with anxiety about changes for nephrology nurses, patients, and patient care, but – moreover – it comes with overwhelming excitement about opportunities in our future. These are opportunities to shape the future of

care delivery for patients with chronic kidney disease and redefine roles of nephrology nurses.

Nephrology nursing will not be the only specialty impacted in the future by payment and care delivery model changes. I was recently in Washington, DC, meeting with nursing and kidney community colleagues to discuss the *Advancing American Kidney Health* initiative's goals and the realities of thoughtful execution. It was discussed that this mandatory model proposing the implementation and testing of Medicare payment for patients with ESRD or requiring radiation oncology has the potential to be applied to patients with other chronic conditions in the future. Once again, it appears the care of patients with kidney disease is leading the way in the implementation of new payment models and care delivery strategies. I encourage you to read the letter on the following pages to better understand ANNA's current and evolving position as we move through a time of exploration and transformation. I have no doubt our strong nephrology nursing foundation grounded in the delivery of high-quality care, evidence-based practice, research, advocacy, and community will provide stability and support during this time of transformation.

Tamara M. Kear, PhD, RN, CNS, CNN
ANNA President

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President's Message

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