Editors
Billie Axley, MS, RN, CNN
Director, Quality Initiatives
Fresenius Medical Center, Inc.
Brentwood, TN

Karen C. Robbins, MS, RN, CNN
Nurse Educator
Dialysis and Transplant Programs
Hartford Hospital
Hartford, CT

Associate Editor
Nephrology Nursing Journal
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Publication Management
Anthony J. Jannetti, Inc.
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Managing Editor: Carol M. Ford
Editorial Coordinator: Jamie Kalitz
Copy Editors: Linda Alexander and Katie Brownlow
Creative Design and Production: Jack M. Bryant, Melody Edwards, Bob Taylor
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American Nephrology Nurses’ Association, East Holly Avenue/Box 56, Pitman,
New Jersey 08071-0056
Web site: www.annanurse.org
Email: anna@ajj.com
Phone: 888-600-2662
### Section 1: Overview of CQI Principles and Tools

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### Section 3: Nephrology Community

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| Chapter 22 | Continuous Quality Improvement and Research in Nursing | Veronica Legg | Earn 1.2 Contact Hours |

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Authors

Billie Axley, MS, RN, CNN
Director, Quality Initiatives
Fresenius Medical Center, Inc.
Brentwood, TN
Editor, and Chapters 4, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 21

Barbara Cortes, RN
Regional Quality Manager
Fresenius Medical Care North America
South Plainfield, NJ
Chapter 18

Helen Currier, BSN, RN, CNN
Assistant Director, Renal and Pharesis
Texas Children’s Hospital
Houston, TX
Chapter 15

Linda Dickenson, BSN, RN, CNN, CQHP
Director of Education, Risk Management and Quality Assessment
Reliant Renal Care, Inc.
Altha, FL
Chapter 12

Lesley C. Dinwiddie, MSN, RN, FNP, CNN
Executive Director
Institute for Clinical Excellence, Education, and Research (ICEER)
Wheaton, IL
Chapter 8

Mary Fenderson, MSHSA, RN, CNN
Nephrology Nurse
FMQAI: The Florida ESRD Network
Tampa, FL
Chapter 20

Bonnie Greenspan, BSN, RN, MBA
Consultant, BBG Consulting, LLC
Member, CMS ESRD Transition Team
Alexandria, VA
Chapter 19

Debra Hain, DNS, ARNP, GNP-BC
Assistant Professor
Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing
Florida Atlantic University
Boca Raton, FL
Chapter 17

Raymond Hakim, MD, PhD
Senior Executive Vice President
Fresenius Medical Center, Inc.
Brentwood, TN
Chapter 21

Diana Hlebovy, BSN, RN, CHN, CNN
Director of Clinical Affairs
Hema Metrics
Kayseville, UT
Chapter 9

Judy Kauffman, BSN, RN, CNN
RN Administrative Coordinator
University of Virginia Health System
Charlottesville, VA
Chapter 13

Deuzimar Kulawik, MSN, RN
Quality Improvement Coordinator
FMQAI: The Florida ESRD Network
Tampa, FL
Chapter 20

Veronica Legg, MS, RN, FNP-BC
Director, Clinical Studies Department
Fresenius Medical Care North America
Battle Ground, WA
Chapter 22

Patricia McCarley, MSN, RN, ACNP, CNN
Nurse Practitioner
Diablo Nephrology Medical Group
Walnut Creek, CA
Chapter 16

Deborah H. Miller, MSN, RN, CNS, CNN
Clinical Nurse Specialist, Pediatric Nephrology
Inova Fairfax Hospital for Children
Falls Church, VA
Chapter 15

Jackie Miller, BS, RN, CNN, CPHQ
Six Sigma Black Belt
Vice President Quality, CBU
Fresenius Medical Care North America
Fort Wayne, IN
Chapter 4

Sylvia Moe, BSN, RN, CNN
Dialysis Home Training Coordinator
Mayo Clinic
Rochester, MN
Chapter 10

Linda Myers, BSN, RN, CNN, HP(ASCP)
Clinician III
Acute Care Renal/Apheresis Services
University of Virginia Health System
Charlottesville, VA
Chapter 13

Leonor P. Ponferrada, BSN, RN, CNN
Quality Management Coordinator
Dialysis Clinic, Inc.
Columbia, MO
Chapter 3

Regina M. Rohe, BS, RN, HP(ASCP)
Regional Vice President, Inpatient Services
Fresenius Medical Care North America
Mill Valley, CA
Chapter 13

Maggie Tatarek, RN, CNN
Clinical Quality Manager
Fresenius Medical Care North America
Latrobe, PA
Chapter 7

MaryKay Shepherd, RD
Dietitian
Fresenius Medical Care North America
Warsaw, IN
Chapter 6

Joan Camarro Simard, MS, RN, CNN
Information System Coordinator
Intermountain Healthcare Dialysis Centers
Salt Lake City, UT
Chapter 2

Tana Waack, BSN, RN
Area Manager
Fresenius Medical Center
Nashville, TN
Chapter 14

Pat Weiskittel, MSN, RN, CNN, ACNP, BC
Renal Hypertension Nurse Practitioner
Cincinnati VA Medical Center
Cincinnati, OH
Chapter 11

Gail Wick, MHSA, BSN, RN, CNN
Consultant
Atlanta, GA
Foreward, Chapters 1 and 5

Angeline F. Wieler, MSN, RN, CNN
Quality Improvement Coordinator
ESRD Network of Texas, Inc.
Dallas, TX
Chapter 20

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Helen F. Williams, MSN, RN, CNN
Staff Nurse Acute Dialysis
Western Nephrology
Denver, CO
Chapter 14

Rebecca Wingard, MSN, RN, CNN
Vice President, Quality Initiatives
Fresenius Medical Care North America
Brentwood, TN
Chapter 6

Reviewers

Kim Alleman, MS, APRN, FNP-BC, CNN-NP
Nurse Practitioner
Hartford Hospital Transplant Program
Hartford, CT

Lynda K. Ball, MSN, BS, RN, CNN
Quality Improvement Director
Northwest Renal Network
Seattle, WA

Jeannette P. Berdowski, MSPH, RN, CNN
Regional Director of Education – New Jersey
Fresenius Medical Care North America
Kenvil, NJ

Jane K. Gardner, DNP, RN
Consultant
Jane K. Gardner, Inc.
Chicago, IL

Marriane Heffernan
Fresenius Medical Care
Corp. Director, Home Therapies
Waltham, MA

Maryann Lyon, BSN, RN, CNN
Speakers’ Bureau, Amgen
Legal Nurse Consultant
Sidney, OH

Kathryn A. McDougall, MS, RN, CDE
Director, Quality Initiatives
Fresenius Medical Care North America
Greenbriar, TN

Glenda M. Payne, MS, RN, CNN
ESRD Technical Lead
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Dallas, TX

Regina M. Rohe, BS, RN, HP(ASCP)
Regional Vice President, Inpatient Services
Fresenius Medical Care North America
Mill Valley, CA

Suzann VanBuskirk, BSN, RN, CNN
Independent Consultant
VanBuskirk Consulting, LLC
Elkton, MD

Helen F. Williams, MSN, BSN, RN, CNN
Staff Nurse Acute Dialysis
Western Nephrology
Denver, CO

Statements of Disclosure

Lesley C. Dinwiddie, MSN, RN, FNP, CNN, disclosed that she is a Consultant and Advisor.

Debra Hain, DNS, ARNP, GNP-BC, disclosed that she is on the Consultant Presenter’s Bureau for Amgen.

Diana Hlebovy, BSN, RN, CHN, CNN, disclosed that she is an educator for Hema Metrics.

Maryann Lyon, BSN, RN, CNN, disclosed that she is on the Consultant Presenter’s Bureau for Amgen.

Patricia McCarley, MSN, RN, ACPN, CNN, disclosed that she is on the Consultant Presenter’s Bureau for Amgen and Genzyme.

Karen C. Robbins, MS, RN, CNN, disclosed that she is on the Consultant Presenter’s Bureau for Watson Pharma, Inc.

Suzann VanBuskirk, BSN, RN, CNN, disclosed that she is on the Consultant Presenter’s Bureau for Watson Pharma, Inc.

Gail Wick, MHSA, BSN, RN, CNN, disclosed that she is on the Consultant Presenter’s Bureau for Watson Pharma, Inc., and Abbott Pharmaceuticals.

All other authors, reviewers, and editors reported no actual or potential conflict of interest in relation to this continuing nursing education publication.
Improving performance and outcomes has always been a focus in the provision of health care, but they really came to the forefront in the 1990s as healthcare organizations developed new, formal approaches to quality assurance and improvement. The stimuli for this arose from increased expectations and standards of consumers and payers, and rising healthcare costs and depleting resources, particularly manpower. Energy and resources were put into play in all arenas of health care as new structures and processes were designed to direct quality improvement and maintenance efforts. Recognizing the needs of our patients, nephrology-related organizations began a pursuit of improvement in all services provided to patients with renal impairment. The goal was to maximize the benefits of health care. Fortunately, there was a philosophy, structure, and process available that helped providers of services and products to become more quality-focused. This concept was continuous quality improvement (CQI).

As part of its mission to advance nephrology nursing practice and positively influence outcomes, and in response to the need for nephrology-specific CQI, ANNA published Continuous Quality Improvement: From Concept to Reality in 1995. In addition to ANNA’s other resources, it paved the way to better practice as well as to the trending and documentation of the outcomes of quality efforts. With this 2nd edition, Applying Continuous Quality Improvement in Clinical Practice, ANNA continues its commitment to timely and relevant publications to help practitioners in their quest for excellence. A practical overview of CQI, case studies, and tools to use in the majority of practice areas within our specialty are contained within this book. In addition to being designed to guide practitioners in their quest for excellence, the contents of the 2nd edition are also geared toward satisfying mandates of oversight organizations, such as The Joint Commission and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). It is important to note that quality and formal programs ensuring quality outcomes are not optional in today’s healthcare world; they are mandated. Therefore, implementing successful quality initiatives is not only the right thing to do, it is necessary to satisfy society’s and government’s mandate to provide the best services possible in the most economical manner.

While some case studies may not directly relate to one’s area of practice, all will stimulate thinking and provide examples of structures and processes that can be used to address the various quality challenges nurses and healthcare professionals face. As you read each section, the questions to answer are, “How does this relate to my practice?” and “How can I adopt or adapt the content to suit the quality challenges my practice setting faces?” While this publication focuses on clinical quality initiatives, the concepts and principles can be applied to anything that needs improving, including technical, financial, and/or personnel issues.

Sound structures and processes aside, quality improvement and maintenance will not occur without commitment and perseverance on the parts of both the practitioner and organization. Nor will they occur overnight. Quality improvement is indeed continuous and ongoing. Fortunately, nurses are known for perseverance as well as for providing leadership within the interdisciplinary team. Your commitment to quality and passion for excellence when combined with the use of this manual’s content can ensure that quality improvement can and will occur. Those we serve will benefit, but so will we, as we reap the satisfaction of continuously improving our professional practice as well as its outcomes.

Gail Wick, MHSA, BSN, RN, CNN
Co-Editor, Continuous Quality Improvement: From Concept to Reality
First Edition © 1995
A prominent focus in health care has been the continuous challenge to provide quality care with limited resources. The first edition of ANNA’s Continuous Quality Improvement: From Concept to Reality was published in 1995. This publication set the groundwork for nephrology nurses to develop a thorough understanding of the concepts and principles needed to implement a continuous quality improvement (CQI) plan in their work environment. The first edition gave us a solid foundation with useful tools to establish a plan to improve healthcare outcomes.

This second edition, Applying Continuous Quality Improvement in Clinical Practice, focuses on nephrology-specific clinical applications of continuous quality improvement. This edition addresses the application of CQI concepts in a wide range of clinical settings. It serves as a vital resource to all members of the nephrology community who seek quality outcomes in a challenging healthcare environment.

The ANNA Board of Directors join me as I commend Editors Billie Axley, MS, RN, CNN, and Karen C. Robbins, MS, RN, CNN, and all of the expert chapter authors and reviewers who contributed to the creation of this valuable publication. We appreciate their expertise and talent they have shared with all of us.

Enjoy this book and use it as a resource to promote and enhance quality outcomes as you care for patients with kidney disease. Both you and your patients will benefit from the knowledge you will gain from this valuable publication.

Sue Cary, MN, APRN, NP, CNN
ANNA President, 2008-2009
Research findings show what we, as nephrology nurses, have understood for many years: the contributions of nursing to patients’ care have a significant effect on improving outcomes. Nurses’ unique knowledge of what is involved in the care provided to patients places us in a position as being essential to the success of improving care processes. Nurses using continuous quality improvement (CQI) and participating in interdisciplinary improvement teams have the opportunity to share their knowledge to improve patient care. We ultimately have the ability to have an impact not only on the care processes, but also on the care delivery systems themselves. Our fundamental objective is for our patients’ safety and improved outcomes.

My goal in serving as an editor for this manual has been to produce a resource in which all nephrology nurses will find information they can apply to patient care and realize the value of the application of CQI in their daily work. While many chapters contain an overview of their content, please listen to the authors’ more extensive discussions as they share expertise from their experiences using CQI to improve their outcomes.

My sincere gratitude goes to those whose contributions resulted in the journey upon which the reader is about to embark in this manual of continuously looking for opportunities to improve, thereby benefiting all patients.

Billie Axley, MS, RN, CNN
Editor

References

This manual is dedicated to nephrology nurses everywhere.