FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dialysis Patients Prepare for Changes in Medicare Payment Policy

Madison, WI—The 350,000 Americans who depend on life-saving dialysis may need to prepare for BIG changes in their care. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is changing the way it pays for dialysis—switching from a somewhat "a la carte" system to a new ESRD "bundle" with a single fixed price for most items and services. CMS will announce the details in the next few weeks, so now is the time for those on dialysis to get up to speed so they can speak up for themselves.

The non-profit Medical Education Institute (MEI) is spearheading an effort to educate people to respond to the new policy through our Home Dialysis Central website. On July 22, we posted a link to a new, comprehensive Q&A to hundreds of people on home dialysis and their supporters. An open letter to home dialysis patients and their care partners—stressing the importance of the upcoming policy change—is on the home page.

Treatment choice at risk
The new payment bundle has the potential to help or harm home treatment options. Details are not yet known, but issues that are likely to affect home patients include:

- Whether dialysis will be paid for per treatment, per week, or per month
- Which lab tests, drugs, and other services will be part of the bundle
- Whether home training will be included in the bundle or not
- Whether Medicare will pay for more than 3 treatments per week

About the Medical Education Institute
The MEI is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) private operating foundation dedicated to helping people with chronic disease learn to manage and improve their health. Since 1993, the MEI has been working to help people with kidney disease live long and live well. MEI launched Home Dialysis Central in 2004 to raise awareness and use of PD and home hemodialysis.

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