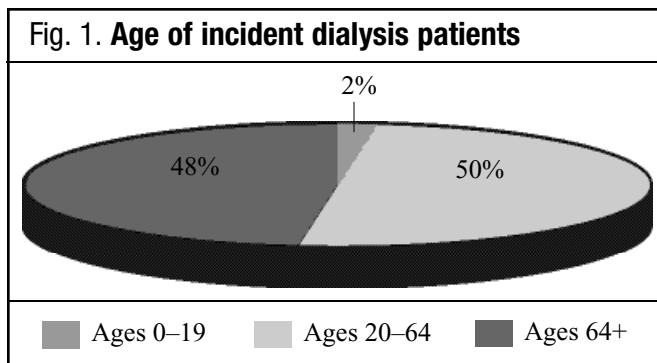


MEI launches Home Dialysis Central website

DORI SCHATELL, MS

FOR THE 50% OF INCIDENT DIALYSIS PATIENTS WHO are working-age dialysis patients (Fig. 1), home dialysis modalities are employment-friendly—enabling them to keep their employer group health insurance for up to 33 months. And, as the dialysis population grows and renal staffing shortages become more acute, home therapies offer cost-effective alternatives that promote patient self-management and improved outcomes.



Yet from 1992 to 2001—while the dialysis population in the United States increased 81% and in-center hemodialysis increased 102%—peritoneal dialysis and home hemodialysis declined 3%. (see Fig. 2).

For these reasons, the Medical Education Institute (MEI) has stepped in to raise awareness and use of home therapies with a new website: Home Dialysis Central (www.homedialysis.org). Designed as a clearinghouse of information and support to patients and professionals regarding five types of home dialysis, Home Dialysis Central has received support from across the renal community. With the help of corporate provider sponsors, who furnish patient data, Home Dialysis Central features an up-to-date database of clinics that offer continuous ambulatory peritoneal dialysis (CAPD), continuous cycling peritoneal dialysis (CCPD), conventional home hemodialysis, daily home hemodialysis, and nocturnal home hemodialysis. Searchable by clinic name, city, state, treatments available, and provider, the new database is a resource for patients seeking a clinic for regular use or vacation, or for renal professionals interested in working in home dialysis.

Ms. Schatell is executive director of the Medical Education Institute Inc., based in Madison, Wis.



Basic listings in the database include the clinic name, address, phone and fax, and treatments offered. Listings can be placed for free. Interested clinics can provide more information through a sponsored listing—including hours of operation, number of home training staff, abil-

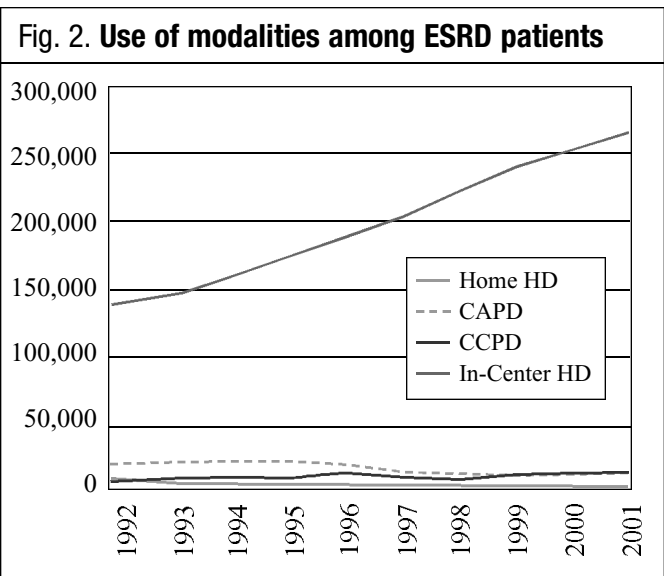
ity to accept traveling patients, how many patients use each modality, a 300-word description and photo. Tax-deductible sponsorship fees help support Home Dialysis Central.

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Professional and Patient Resources

Home Dialysis Central offers up-to-the-minute news about home therapies, courtesy of a news feed from *Nephrology News & Issues*. The site also offers a wealth of content on Medicare reimbursement issues for professionals and patients, and practical tools to help a clinic become certified to offer home dialysis, teach patients how to perform the buttonhole technique, assess cost feasibility, and more. Downloadable modality sections for each of the five home therapies for patients were reviewed by a panel of national home dialysis experts: Christopher Blagg, MD; Robert Lockridge, MD; Karl Nolph, MD; Beth Piraino, MD; and Bessie Young, MD.

Professional resources include slide presentations, how-to documents, assessment tools, and bibliographies on costs, outcomes, and patient self-management developed from PubMed searches. Live PubMed search capabilities are also available on



the site. An equipment catalog section profiles each CCPD and home hemodialysis machine with information about physical dimensions, features, benefits, the manufacturer, and a photo.

Legislative Tracking and Support

Patients interested in home therapies might also prove to be effective advocates for improved dialysis care. A legislative engine will make it easy for Home Dialysis Central visitors to respond quickly to issues that affect preserving and expanding home dialysis options by emailing legislators to request bill sponsorship or support. Site users who choose to become members will receive

HOME DIALYSIS U · P · D · A · T · E

free email updates about home dialysis happenings.

Moderated message boards for patients and professionals enable one-on-one support and information sharing on a variety of topics—for patients, from coping with daily life on a home dialysis treatment to staying employed; for professionals, from starting a home program to navigating insurance challenges. Patient stories offer prospective patients a glimpse into the day-to-day lifestyle associated with various home treatments. Finally, an extensive set of annotated links divided by categories makes it easy to find related information on home dialysis therapies.

Conclusion

Home Dialysis Central is a new resource for the renal community to support increased use of five, less staff-intensive home treatments that offer flexible schedules, increased personal control, and the potential for improved dialysis adequacy to patients. Site visitors can share their own resources, stories, and links to help round out the information available.

For free postcards to inform patients about Home Dialysis Central, contact the Medical Education Institute at 608.833.8033 or send an email request to info@meiresearch.org.

Fig. 3. **Supporters of Home Dialysis Central**

- Fresenius Medical Care
- Gambro Healthcare
- Aksys
- B. Braun
- Baxter Renal Care
- DaVita Inc.
- Dialysis Clinics Inc.
- The Forum of End-Stage Renal Disease Networks
- The Missouri Kidney Program
- *Nephrology News & Issues*
- NxStage
- Renal Care Group
- Renal Solutions
- WellBound