

# My Network: What to Do If I Have a Grievance

One of Heartland Kidney Network's jobs is to help you if you have a complaint (grievance) about the care you get at a dialysis or transplant center.

Patients, patient advocates and family members can call the Network anytime, for any reason, about the care given at a Medicare-certified clinic and/or concerns about access to dialysis care.



## What is a grievance?

**grievance:** | 'grē-vən(t)s | *noun*

1. a strong feeling that you have been treated unfairly  
[*objection, injustice, ax-to-grind, beef, hardship, injury*]

**Who:** Anyone (patient, family member or patient advocate)

**What:** Anything (nothing is too small)

**When:** Any time (sooner the better)

**Where:** At dialysis or transplant center

**Why:** To make things better for all patients

Medicare defines a grievance as: “A written or oral communication from an end stage renal disease (ESRD) patient, and/or an individual representing an ESRD patient, and/or another party, alleging that an ESRD service received from a Medicare-certified provider did not meet the grievant's expectations with respect to safety, civility, patient rights, and/or clinical standards of care.”

All dialysis patients have a right to file a grievance about their care with the clinic, the Network and/or the State Survey Agency and should **feel safe** when doing so.

## How can I deal with my concerns?

You can call the Network at ANY TIME. You do not have to talk to the clinic first. But here are a few other suggestions that you can try:



**Stay calm.** Do not get angry. Get information instead.



**Talk it out.** Tell a staff member that you trust about your concerns.



**Write it out.** It may help you to focus on what is most important to you if you write down your thoughts.



**Ask.** If you are not getting an answer to your concerns, ask to talk to the next person in the clinic's grievance process.



You have the right to be **anonymous**. The Network may still be able to help with your grievance even if you do not want the clinic or the Network to know your name.

## How do I contact the Network?

You can contact the Network by mail, email or phone, Monday through Friday at:

### ESRD Network 12

920 Main, Suite 801 | Kansas City, MO 64105  
net12@nw12.esrd.net | (800) 444-9965

## What will happen when I call the Network?



The Network staff will listen to you, ask and answer questions and talk with you about what can be done to help you with your concern.



With your permission, the Network may then start calls with the clinic to talk and work with you all to help with your concern.



The Network may review your medical record to learn more about the care you were given.



The Network may refer your grievance to another agency if they have authority over issues like your concern.

## My Questions

### Ask Your Care Team:

- Who do I talk to when I have a concern about my care? (Write above.)
- What is the grievance process at this clinic?
- Is there an anonymous way to share a concern?

## Who can I contact at my clinic?

You can talk to any staff members, your doctor, the clinic manager or social worker for help.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## What if I have a safety concern?

The Network and the State Survey agencies work together to handle grievances about dialysis or kidney transplant care. The State Survey Agency may go on-site to inspect a clinic. If it is a life-threatening situation, the State Survey Agency makes sure the clinic is running safely. You can contact the State Survey Agency for your state at:

**Iowa** Department of Inspections & Appeals  
(877) 686-0027

**Kansas** Department of Health & Environment  
(800) 842-0078

**Missouri** Department of Health  
(800) 392-0210 or (573) 751-6303

**Nebraska** Department of Health & Human Services  
(402) 471-0316

For more information visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) or call 800-MEDICARE