



Words of Wisdom Recommendations for Process Improvements from a Patient Perspective

Schedule Changes

Changes in treatment schedules are a necessary and challenging part of managing a dialysis clinic. While the intent may be to improve patient safety, changes can prove difficult for patients as they've related that doing so makes them feel like they have no personal control of those changes. Effective, empathetic communication is key to keep a schedule change from negatively impacting the staff/patient relationship and/or becoming a grievance. Here are a few suggestions from patient experts on ways to improve patient satisfaction with the schedule change process.

Qsource ESRD Networks are committed to including the patient voice in all quality improvement efforts. Bringing the patient perspective to the quality improvement process can help the clinic to better understand problems identified and develop patient-centered interventions. With this in mind, the Networks would like to share several ideas our patient experts have provided to help clinics address common grievances.

- For new patients, give them information about the process, including why changes may occur and how they will be notified.
- Try to limit the number of changes being made to a patient's treatment schedule. For example, moving a patient's chair and chair time.
- Try to limit the amount of time difference. If you are able to keep a patient's time change down to a 15 minute change they can handle it much better versus an hour change.
- Don't forget to consider each patient's situation such as:
 - Other medical conditions requiring frequent appointments
 - Work/volunteer/family schedule
 - Transportation needs
- Talk to the patients first before giving out written notification.
- Provide patients with written notification. A minimum of 30 days is considered the community standard.
- Written notification should include:
 - Reason for the change
 - Time when the change will occur
 - New schedule
 - Who the patient can talk to about concerns
 - Reminder that there is a 15 minute "window" with treatment times
- If it is a clinic-wide change, post a notice in the waiting room as well.
- Make sure staff is keeping to the schedule. Consistency is key to ensuring fair treatment.
- Consider giving reminders of schedules on a monthly basis.

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