

**CMS RESPONSE TO AHRQ  
ON THE ESRD CAHPS® FEASIBILITY STUDY**

December 9, 2003



## **Center for Beneficiary Choices**

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December 9, 2003

Beth Kosiak, PhD.  
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality  
540 Gaither Road, Suite 300  
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Dr. Kosiak:

We are writing to acknowledge receipt of the End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) CAHPS Feasibility Report. We found the report to be comprehensive, and one that captures the unique issues relevant to the ESRD population. CMS will be reviewing each recommendation in detail, and plans to incorporate all that we can into the survey development process. We are pleased with the work to date and ask that AHRQ proceed with developing a standard survey tool and designing a pilot/field test.

When designing and testing the survey questionnaire, CMS asks that AHRQ study which items are and which items are not under the control of facilities. Additionally, CMS requests that AHRQ explore in the field-testing how most patients will use the reports and what information providers need from the reports to guide their quality improvement efforts. This effort would include determining the best way to disseminate the information.

CMS asks that AHRQ gather data and expert input to guide the question of an appropriate minimum threshold for contact with the facility to determine when to exclude patients from participating in the survey. Questions that address this point could be included on the survey. Use of proxy respondents could be studied further in field-testing. In reference to your recommendation for CMS to use a third party to administer the survey, CMS will be exploring options that could be used for administration of the survey and would serve to minimize the burden on dialysis providers.

Regarding studying the mode effects and other important differences (i.e., costs, response rates), CMS asks that AHRQ include only telephone interviews and mail surveys with telephone follow-up in the field-testing. In order to resolve the analytical issues that you referred to in the report (i.e., point estimate), we suggest use of the CMS Annual Facility Survey. Information concerning patient modality types by facility, in aggregate numbers, as well as other data for the survey period ending 2002 are available on CMS website at [www.cms.hhs.gov/esrd/8.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/esrd/8.asp).

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of beneficiaries with ESRD.

Sincerely,

Barbara Paul, MD  
Director, Quality Measurement and Health Assessment Group  
Center for Beneficiary Choices  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

