



SOCIAL WORK NEWSLETTER

MAY 2015

Why Should I Get a Fistula?

While the prospect of getting stuck with needles may seem dreadful, there are many reasons why Fistulas (AVF) and Grafts (AVG) are better for you:

- 1) Less Infection risk. Fistula's and grafts are shown statistically to have MUCH less rates of infection.
- 2) Able to go in the water. You can shower, bathe, swim, play in the ocean without the high infection risks of a catheter.
- 3) Less Medical Procedures. Catheters on average must be replaced every 3 months. A well placed graft or fistula can last a lifetime.
- 4) Less Toxins in your system. Fistulas and Grafts have better access to your blood stream and allow much more toxins to be taken out in a given time frame.
- 5) Overall better health. Persons overall report an easier dialysis treatment, more energy and less hospitalizations.

So, If the idea of a fistula or graft is scaring you please look at the benefits of having one. Overall, it will be a healthier you in the long run.

Dialysis Support Group

High Desert Kidney Hope's dialysis support group has moved locations to the Heritage Building #34 on Hesperia Rd. Right next to Vitelli's Deli. Every month it is held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday from 6 to 7:30pm. This month, the groups will be held: **May 12 and May 26 from 6 to 7:30pm.**

Incontinence and Wound Supplies

If you or a loved one requires briefs, pads, gauze, or other supplies they may be covered by your insurance. Go to www.shieldhealthcare.com or call 1-800-765-8775 to see if the supplies are covered.

If you are not covered by your insurance, your social workers have free incontinent supplies currently for those in need.

Utility Discounts

Multiple Discounts are available, not all are income based. If you are on dialysis, you qualify for Medical Baseline which allows more inexpensive utility usage. Also, income based discounts include the CARE program and weatherization program. HEAP program will pay for a utility bill per year call (800) 510-2020 and ask about HEAP.

FREE Cellular Phone and 250 Monthly Minutes

For those that qualify, this government assisted program will provide a free cell phone and discounted monthly minutes. You may automatically qualify by being in a public assistance program such as: Medi-CAL, Section 8, WIC, or Food Stamps.

WE WILL HAVE A REPRESENTATIVE FROM BUDGET MOBILE IN OUR LOBBY AREA TALKING ABOUT THIS PROGRAM AND SIGNING PERSONS UP.

Enrollment is simple, just call 1-800-430-0443, or see one of your social workers for assistance.



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New Kidney Allocation System

Effective December 2014, the new allocation system for cadaver kidneys went into effect. There are minor changes into who receives kidneys and the quality of kidney received. For most people, very little will be affected. The highlights of the changes are as follows:

- 1) Persons with high antibodies will be given preference for an excellent match.
- 2) Overall, an excellent match will supersede wait time on the list.
- 3) Each person on the waiting list will be scored according to age, health and other factors.
- 4) Each kidney received will receive a score according to age of deceased donor and their health status.
- 5) Kidney score and recipient score will be matched so that the person receiving a kidney will theoretically receive a kidney that will live as long as the recipient
- 6) No longer will our local area have to “pay back” kidneys received from out of area.
- 7) All wait lists nationwide will be based on start date of dialysis.

Advanced Arrangements

While almost none of us are comfortable with the idea of being incapacitated or even of dying, unfortunately it is an inevitable part of life. So many times friends and family are caught in a situation where they are not sure of their loved one’s wishes.

We urge you to spare your friends and loved ones the burden and ensure that your wants are carried out in the event you cannot choose, so:

- 1) Please complete your Advanced Directives
- 2) Please complete your final arrangements.

There are inexpensive, even free ways to prepare as long as it is done in advance! Please talk to your social workers about options for you.

Copays for Medications

Social workers are applying for persons who need assistance with paying copays. Programs exist that can help you. Please let your social worker know if you are having trouble affording your copay, or if your copay seems higher than it should be. We have already identified some individuals who we expect to be hitting the “donut hole” this year and we will be approaching you with options.

Stay Active

Exercise is a key ingredient in mental and physical health. Do what you can for activity. Whether it is arm lifts, leg lifts, curls, standing and balancing or running. Whatever you can physically do will improve your outcomes. Physical exercise improves mood, sleep regularity, appetite and physical independence. Ask your doctor what exercise you can do today.

Humor



Lori Janes-Hartwell