



SOCIAL WORK NEWSLETTER

January 2016

Value of Exercise

Research shows us that exercise is one of the few simple things that patients have control over that actually has power to do all of the following:

- Boost energy
- Help control blood pressure
- Strengthen muscles
- Elevate mood and reduce depression
- Reduce the risk of heart attack
- Better weight control
- Increased flexibility of joints and strength of muscles
- Fewer falls
- Improvement in sleep patterns

So, if you are looking for a way that you can feel better while on dialysis try exercising. Talk to your doctor about any limitations for your exercise regime. Start slow and gradually work up.

In Home Care

Needing assistance at home? There are 3 options for home care depending on your income.

First, for persons with **Medi-Cal** there is In Home Supportive Services (IHSS) which can be applied for by calling (877) 800-4544. These county paid services allows either a person you know to get paid for assisting you OR you can choose from certified IHSS workers.

The amount of hours per month allowed is based on your need for care.

Secondly, if your income is too high for Medi-Cal, then **privately paid** care is available. Typically it runs from \$22 to \$26 per hour.

Lastly, if you are a disabled veteran then you could qualify for **VA Aid and Attendance** benefit. Talk to your VA social worker about whether you qualify and how to apply.

Dialysis Support Group

High Desert Kidney Hope's dialysis support group is currently **on hold** until interest in attending the support group increases.

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.

Safety Net Grants

American Kidney Fund is still accepting grant applications. Their grant is to assist patients with dialysis related expenses. Limit of \$100 per year per patient. Talk to your social worker about applying for assistance paying for medications, transportation, or other health related expenses. For those who have applied already, there is a delay in processing.

Check Out Our Website

Previous issues of the Social Work Newsletter, upcoming events, information on your health care team and Desert Cities Dialysis unit news. Go to: www.desertcitiesdialysis.com



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Health Insurance Premium Payment

The American Kidney Fund also has a grant to assist patients in paying for health insurance. Eligibility for this program includes:

- 1) Premium is not automatically deducted from your social security.
- 2) After your basic bills are paid, you have less than \$500 left over.
- 3) You have no liquid assets over \$3000 that could be used to pay the premium.

Please talk to your social worker if you meet these three requirements.

Grief and Loss

Persons on dialysis are experiencing many losses. Loss of freedom, loss of health, loss of finances, loss of friends, loss of abilities, sometimes loss of intimate relationships and many more. In addition, sometimes we lose loved ones or important people in our lives. Loss can result in overwhelming sadness or anger.

If you have lost a loved one and are having difficulty coping, there are local support groups for grief and loss. Please talk with your social worker for local support to be there in your time of need.

FMLA and California Paid Leave

This is the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). If you or a loved one must leave work either for medical reasons or to care for a loved one, it offers up to 12 weeks of job protection. Often used in conjunction with California Paid Leave or State Disability. Typically used by family to assist dialysis patients during a time of need. Talk with your social workers for more information.

Home Health Services

Your insurance typically covers for medical services in the home that cannot be provided at the dialysis center. Talk to your social worker about services you may need your Doctor to order:

Wound Care- If you have an opening in your skin of any kind that needs care.

Evaluation- Check your medications, blood pressure, and evaluate your health needs for recommendations to you and your doctor.

Physical Therapy-Help improve your strength, balance, endurance. Also, proper transfer of yourself or your caregiver to prevent injuries.

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.

Humor



And today we start on the manly needle.