

COVID -19 and New Direction for Dialysis Patients at LTC

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Background: During the pandemic, there were concerns about COVID-19 at long-term care (LTC) facilities. Instead of transferring LTC patients to the hospital, we used a portable dialysis system (NxStage and AK98) at LTC homes to perform dialysis. Transporting patients to hospitals and returning them to LTC facilities may expose the patients to infectious persons during their trips.

Study Design: This feasibility study was designed to evaluate the sustainability of dialysis services in LTC facilities.

Setting and Participants: LTC facilities located within the Central local health integrated network (LHIN) were engaged to participate in this pilot project. Chronic dialysis patients receiving outpatient hemodialysis consented and enrolled in the LTC dialysis program.

Results: Between May 2020 and May 2021, a total of 30 chronic hemodialysis patients were enrolled into the pilot study. The LTC service model proved to be superior in terms of the quality of care dialysis patients were able to receive at their residence. Implementation of this model allowed us to demonstrate fiscal viability based on the ratio between costs and revenue, and create an additional acute in-center capacity for 30 new dialysis patients.

Limitations: With the exception of clinical markers, there have been no additional key performance indicators built into the study design to evaluate the quality of the model in relation to the dialysis standard of care.

Conclusions: The LTC dialysis services help increase efficiency in the delivery of care, and enhance convenience, safety, and quality of life for patients at LTC. Patients no longer need to rely on outside transportation to their dialysis treatment. This plan is very convenient for LTC patients and reduces the risk of infection and exposure to COVID-19.