



**Dialysis Facility Care Compare on Medicare.gov (DFCC)  
National Provider Call  
October 18, 2023**

**October 2023 Release**

**When will the Quality of Patient Care Star Ratings be updated on DFCC?**

The star ratings will be updated with the October 2023 release.

**What updates will be made to the October 2023 Patient Quality of Care Star Rating Release?**

The following updates to the Star Ratings will be incorporated into the October 2023 release:

- Reset the Star Rating distribution
- Domain 1 measures will be risk-adjusted to reflect COVID-19 impact
- Down-weight of Domain 3 (Total Kt/V and Hypercalcemia)
- Addition of two transplant waitlist measures currently reported on Care Compare (PPPW and SWR)

**What measures are being adjusted for COVID-19?**

With the October 2023 release, we have incorporated patient-level, time-limited risk adjustment for COVID-19 for the following measures:

- Standardized Mortality Ratio (SMR)
- Standardized Hospitalization Ratio (SHR)
- Standardized Readmission Ratio (SRR)
- Standardized Transfusion Ratio (STrR)

**What are the new measures being added to the DFCC October release?**

Two new measures are being added to DFCC for the October 2023 release:

- Standardized Emergency Department Encounter Ratio (SEDR)
- Standardized Ratio of Emergency Department Encounters Occurring Within 30 Days of Hospital Discharge (ED30) for Dialysis Facilities

**January 2024 Release**

**What data will be updated with the January 2024 release?**

The following clinical care quality measures on Dialysis Facility Care Compare have been updated with data from April 2022-March 2023:

- Adult and child patients who had enough waste removed from their blood during hemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis.
- Adult patients who had too much calcium in their blood.
- Adult patients who received treatment through an arteriovenous fistula
- Adult patients who had a catheter (tube) left in a vein for at least 3 consecutive complete months, for their regular hemodialysis treatments.
- Measurement of nPCR for Pediatric Hemodialysis Patients.
- Patients who were on the kidney or kidney-pancreas transplant waiting list.

The following measures have been updated on Provider Data Catalogue:

- Hemoglobin management.



- Phosphorus concentrations in the blood.

#### **What new measure will be added to DFCC with the January 2024 release?**

CMS will add the CDC COVID-19 Healthcare Personnel Vaccination measure to DFCC in the January 2024 release. CMS believes it is important to incentivize and track healthcare personnel (HCP) vaccination in dialysis facilities through quality measurement to protect health care workers, patients, and caregivers, and to help sustain the ability of hospitals to continue serving their communities throughout the Public Health Emergency (PHE) and beyond. The measure will assess the proportion of a dialysis facility's health care workforce that is vaccinated against COVID-19.

#### **January 2024 Preview Period**

##### **When is the preview period for the January 2024 DFCC release?**

The preview period for the January 2024 DFCC release will be held November 1-15, 2023. Facility level reports will be posted on <https://www.DialysisData.org>.

##### **What measure will be included in the dry run table in the January 2024 preview report?**

In the January 2024 preview report, there will be a dry run table that will preview the Standardized Modality Switch Ratio for Incident Dialysis Patients (SMoSR). The SMoSR is defined to be the ratio of the number of observed first modality switches (from in-center to home dialysis—peritoneal or home hemodialysis) that occur for adult incident ESRD dialysis patients treated at a particular facility, to the number of modality switches (from in-center to home dialysis—peritoneal or home hemodialysis) that would be expected given the characteristics of the dialysis facility's patients and the national norm for dialysis facilities. The measure includes only the first durable switch that is defined as lasting 30 continuous days or longer.

##### **Will patient lists be available for the January 2024 preview reports?**

At this time, CMS will no longer provide patient lists upon request to dialysis facilities during the preview period. We understand that this has been a helpful tool in reviewing your data. We are continuing to explore options for facilities to have access to this data in the future.

#### **Miscellaneous Questions**

##### **Will CMS return to covering measures from a January 1 – December 31 timeframe?**

The timeframe has not changed. CMS releases clinical measure updates in October of each year. Coverage of those measures runs from January 1 through December 31 of the following calendar year.

##### **The CDC National Health Safety Network (NHSN) is only counting the new COVID booster. How is that going to affect a facility's score?**

At present, the COVID measure that will be in DFCC is the same as the one that is currently in the End Stage Renal Disease Quality Incentive Program (ESRD QIP). The 2024 ESRD Prospective Payment System (PPS) rule finalizes the adoption of the CDC National Health Safety Network's (NHSN) updated measure into the ESRD QIP. If this proposal is finalized, the ESRD QIP would utilize NHSN's updated measure, available in January 2024..

##### **What is the workaround procedure for viewing patient-level data during the preview period if a facility has questions about a patient's data?**



At this time, there is no definitive workaround procedure for viewing patient-level data. If participants identify data-related issues during the review period, they are encouraged to contact CMS directly by emailing the UM-KECC helpdesk at [dialysisdata@umich.edu](mailto:dialysisdata@umich.edu), calling the QualityNet helpdesk at 1-866-288-8912, or by visiting <http://help.mycrownweb.org/>.

**How will the new COVID-19 HCP vaccination measure be incorporated into domains and weighting?**

The new COVID-19 HCP vaccination measure is not included in Star Ratings but will be reported on in the DFCC.

**Why is CMS no longer providing patient reports during the quarterly DFC preview periods?**

CMS is currently transitioning its system to enhance data security. In the future, CMS hopes this transition will include the ability for facilities to retrieve their own facility lists. In the meantime, CMS will work with facilities on a case-by-case basis to investigate any data concerns found during the preview period that are of concern to them.

**How will commenting during the preview period be affected by facilities no longer receiving patient lists?**

The comment process will remain unchanged. Facilities will still have 15 days to review their reports on <https://www.DialysisData.org> and then submit questions about the reports to CMS through the dialysis data portal.

**Is the COVID HCP measure for DFC different than the COVID HCP measure in the ESRD QIP?**

No, they are the same.

**Are In-Center Hemodialysis CAHPS (ICH CAHPS) Star Ratings on a forced distribution like clinical Star Ratings?**

No, the ICH CHAPS Star Ratings are not on a forced distribution.

**Will public data be released in the Provider Data Catalog during the October 2023 release?**

Yes.

**Will there be a public comment process to address any of the DFC changes?**

There will not be a formal public comment process. CMS is considering hosting listening sessions to elicit feedback from the ESRD provider community. CMS also shares documents to help participants better understand its methodology on its website. To learn about new events and support documents, participants are encouraged to sign up for the DFCC listserv by contacting [cmsdialysisfacilitycompare@ketchum.com](mailto:cmsdialysisfacilitycompare@ketchum.com).

**What is the timeframe of the dry-run data?**

The dry run utilizes data from 2019 through 2021.

**What is the quality indicator assessed for SMOsR?**

The quality indicator for SMOsR is standardized modality switch ratio. This indicator reflects the quantity of patients who transition from in-center hemodialysis to a home-based therapy, relative to the quantity CMS expects, based on the makeup of a facility.

**Will ESRD providers receive an email notification when Five-Star data has been released?**



The release of Five Star data will be announced via email through the DFCC listserv. The listserv will also notify subscribers immediately after any updates have been made to the care compare site. To sign up for the listserv, please contact [cmsdialysisfacilitycompare@ketchum.com](mailto:cmsdialysisfacilitycompare@ketchum.com).

**How does CMS suggest ESRD providers pinpoint discrepancies in the data without patient lists?**

CMS understands the challenges its system transition may create for program participants, and it appreciates their patience. Currently, all options are being considered for navigating this challenge, and CMS will issue guidance as appropriate.