CMS Study Show that DaVita Leads Industry in Fistula Use

Company Results Surpass KDOQI Goal for Vascular Access

DaVita, a national provider of kidney dialysis services, leads the industry in fistula use according to a recent study released by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS). The study, which compares fistula use among prevalent hemodialysis patients, found that as of November, DaVita patients had primary access via a fistula at rates more than 6 percentage points higher than the goal of 40% established by CMS and the National Kidney Foundation's KDOQI guidelines. DaVita led the country in average percent fistula use, beating the next closest provider by 3%.

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The results are attributed to DaVita's vascular access management program and the "Fistula First" program developed by CMS as a way to increase the likelihood that every eligible patient receives the optimal form of vascular access. A fistula is a surgically created connection between an artery and a vein in the forearm and is highly effective as it provides maximum blood flow and fewer complications than alternative vascular access methods. Use of fistulas has been shown to be correlated with decreased hospitalizations and lower utilization of epogen, reducing Medicare costs.

Since November, DaVita's average percent fistula use has continued to improve. "Most patients have safer, higher-quality access to hemodialysis treatment via an AV fistula," said DaVita CEO Kent Thiry. "Appropriate fistula use is one of the greatest gifts we can give our patients, their families, and the American taxpayer."

The Fistula First program was initiated by CMS to help improve survival rates among dialysis patients in the United States, where the mortality rate in the first year of dialysis treatment is 20 to 70 percent higher among patients who receive dialysis with an access other than a fistula. The goal of the Fistula First initiative is to increase the percentage of patients with fistulas to 66 percent by 2010.

DaVita Inc. is one of the largest providers of dialysis services in the United States, providing dialysis services for those diagnosed with chronic kidney failure and disease. DaVita manages over 1,300 outpatient facilities and acute units in over 800 hospitals located in 42 states and the District of Columbia, serving approximately 100,000 patients. For more information please visit www.DaVita.com.

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