DaVita Offers Patient Tips in Support of World Mental Health Day

Dialysis Provider Takes Holistic Approach in Caring for Patients

DENVER--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Oct. 10, 2013-- DaVita®, a division of DaVita HealthCare Partners Inc. (NYSE:DVA) and a leading provider of kidney care services, today shared tips for dialysis patients coping with life changes that might affect mental health in honor of World Mental Health Day, which isOctober 10.

"World Mental Health Day serves as a reminder not only of caregivers who provide support but also of patients seeking help," said Duane Dunn, national director of social work services for DaVita. "Dialysis patients face complex and sometimes challenging circumstances but with the support of their care team, family and friends they can overcome the obstacles and enjoy a high quality of life."

DaVita reminds patients to use the resources at their center, particularly their interdisciplinary team. This care team includes their nephrologist, nurse, patient care technician, renal dietitian and social worker.

There are some recommended steps for patients coping with life changes associated with starting dialysis or switching to a new treatment method.

- Get educated: Patients can use the tools provided by their interdisciplinary team, including reading materials, props and hands-on experience to prepare for lifestyle changes. Websites like DaVita.com also offer various resources for coping with the transition to a life on dialysis. In addition, DaVita sponsors no-cost kidney education classes, referred to as Kidney Smart, to help educate both pre-dialysis chronic kidney disease patients as well as those on dialysis about their kidney health and making the right choices for their individual needs. Classes can be taken online or in-person.
- Explore options for continuing to work: Many adults feel that working is an integral part of their lives; dialysis patients are no different. According to a study from 2010, dialysis patients who continue to work after starting treatment are 21 percent less likely to have depression. In addition, a recent study found that working patients are three times more likely to receive kidney transplants. DaVita offers flexible in-center dialysis shifts and alternative modalities that can accommodate working patients. Individual patients have specific and varying needs, which is why it is important for patients to speak with their interdisciplinary team to determine what is best for them.
- Share your feelings: Depression in dialysis patients can be hard to identify. If a patient is feeling depressed or having difficulty coping, they should talk about it with their nephrology social worker and doctor. This interdisciplinary team will be able to provide an assessment, supportive counseling and referrals for additional support services in the community.
- Seek counseling: Outpatient services are available at a variety of agencies in most communities. Patients and their families can see a nephrology social worker for a local referral.
- Join a support group: In many communities, support groups are available to both kidney care patients and caregivers. It is important that a patient doesn't feel that they are alone in dealing with kidney disease or dialysis. Online communities are also growing. For example, those affected by kidney disease can connect onDaVita's Facebook page, among others. In addition, myDaVita.com is a platform where patients can find others like them to offer and receive support. Nephrology social workers can also recommend support groups that may be available.

Depression can mimic the symptoms of many other illnesses. Only a qualified professional can make a diagnosis based on the description of symptoms.

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About DaVita

DaVita is the dialysis division of DaVita HealthCare Partners Inc., a Fortune 500® company that, through its operating divisions, provides a variety of health care services to patient populations throughout the United States and abroad. A leading provider of kidney care in the United States, DaVita delivers dialysis services to patients with chronic kidney failure and end stage renal disease. DaVita strives to improve patients' quality of life by innovating clinical care, and by offering integrated treatment plans, personalized care teams and convenient health-management services. As of June 30, 2013, DaVita operated or provided administrative services at 2,010 outpatient dialysis centers located in the United States serving approximately 159,000 patients. The company also operates 48outpatient dialysis centers located in ten countries outside the United States. DaVita supports numerous programs dedicated to creating positive, sustainable change in communities around the world. The company's leadership development initiatives and social responsibility efforts have been recognized by Fortune, Modern Healthcare, Newsweek and WorldBlu. For more information, please visit DaVita.com.

Source: DaVita

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