



Service to those affected by chronic kidney disease

December 1, 2006

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**To:** The Honorable Charles Rangel

**From:** Lori Hartwell  
President/Founder  
Renal Support Network

**Re:** Comments to Consider During Hearing on ESRD Policies

Dear Congressman Rangel:

The Renal Support Network (RSN) is a nonprofit, patient-focused, patient-run organization that strives to help patients develop their personal coping skills, special talents, and employability by educating and empowering them, as well as their family members, to take control of the course and management of the disease.

People who have chronic kidney disease are very grateful for the ESRD program and how it has helped continue our lives. With the upcoming hearing on quality of dialysis care and the discussion that will ensue, we would like to bring up a few points to consider:

1. Ensure that people who have ESRD have access to quality care, especially in rural and inner-city areas.
2. Be certain that polices implemented improve the quality of care and that measures are in place to ensure this process.
3. Allow patients to have a choice as to where to dialyze and the different modality options (including home therapies). Offer equal incentives to both small and large providers to stay a viable business.
4. Provide reimbursement structures that include the ability for new innovative technologies to emerge that will improve our overall well-being.

CMS has brought forth several initiatives to improve care such as: Fistula First, Dialysis Facility Compare Website, Know Your Numbers, and the Clinical Performance Measures, to name a few.

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**An illness is too demanding when you don't have hope!**

## Renal Support Network

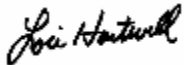
In addition, CMS has brought forth a Demonstration Project that will look to see whether bundling of care for people who have ESRD will improve quality, taking into account all of the considerations of this diverse patient population. The completion of this project is critical to understanding all of the complexities of care we patients have. The information from the project will help lead to a thoughtful system that will protect Medicare dollars and at the same time provide quality patient care and outcomes.

You are well aware of the Kidney Care Quality and Improvement Act of 2005 that address other concerns of the kidney community.

There is much to be learned about the diverse kidney patient population, and RSN appreciates Congress taking the time to figure out ways to improve the care and the access to care for all patients. As you seek ways to improve the ESRD program with alternative payment methods, the patients ask that you please allow the kidney community (including the patients) to be part of the process.

Please call on us if you need any information or have any further questions.

Sincerely,



Lori Hartwell  
RSN President & Founder

cc: The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert  
The Honorable Max Baucus  
The Honorable Joe Barton  
The Honorable John D. Dingell  
The Honorable Charles E. Grassley