

CHAPTER 7

THE NETWORK'S ROLE IN THE GRIEVANCE PROCESS

It is always good to allow the facility to address your grievance first. This is **not a requirement**.

THE NETWORK WILL BECOME INVOLVED IF:

- a. YOU ARE NOT COMFORTABLE HANDLING THE ISSUE AT THE FACILITY.
- b. YOU BELIEVE YOUR CONCERNS WERE NOT RESOLVED AT THE FACILITY.

Q. 1 - How do I contact the Network?

The Network will investigate grievances received by:

- ♦ *Phone* ♦ *Fax* ♦ *or in Writing*

Your ESRD Network believes that every patient should receive quality care. The Network can help dialysis patients with concerns about their care. If you have a concern, the Network's role is to serve as an investigator, facilitator, referral agent, coordinator, and/or educator.

The purpose of the ESRD Network in a grievance is to:

- ✓ *Keep communications open between patients and ESRD facility staff on issues, problems, or grievances.*
- ✓ *Ensure problems are solved as quickly as possible.*
- ✓ *Help patients feel comfortable taking their concerns to an appropriate authority without fear of mistreatment or retaliation.*
- ✓ *Help patients through the grievance process.*



Sometimes grievances cannot be resolved with the Network's help. If the Network cannot resolve your grievance, you may be referred to an agency that can help you.

Q. 2 - Will the dialysis or transplant facility know that I have filed a grievance?

Anonymous or unknown grievances can be filed. You should know that it is more difficult to get the needed information though. You will be informed if that is the case.

Q. 3 - Can someone else represent me?

You may have a representative or someone to help explain the problem. In this case, you may choose anyone you wish. If you have a representative, the ESRD Network must have your approval for this person to process the grievance for you.



Q. 4 - What if the issue is life threatening?

When appropriate, the Network's Medical Review Board (MRB) appoints a committee to handle the issues raised in a grievance. These reviews are known as Quality Case Reviews or Peer Reviews. Reviewers may include MRB members and Network staff. The Network assures that no one involved with the grievance or the facility is a reviewer. In some cases, the grievance may be reported to the State Survey Agency or Department of Health. This agency inspects dialysis facilities for Medicare. In issues of "immediate jeopardy", life-threatening situations, the state agency has the authority to shut down a facility until it is safe.

Network staff will determine the best method to handle a grievance.

Network staff will notify you by mail on the next business day if a case is referred to another agency.

Many cases can be resolved quickly through immediate advocacy. In these situations, Network staff acts as a mediator between the patient and the facility. Everyone must be willing to work together. Every effort is made to work out the problem within 7 calendar days.

More serious cases may be required to go through a quality care review. In these situations, medical records are requested, staff and patients may be interviewed, and other provider records may be reviewed. The patient's written consent may be required.

Every effort is made to complete all investigations within 60 days. If the case is not closed within 60 days, everyone will be told of the delay and when it is expected to conclude.

Call your Network if you have any other specific questions.

They will gladly assist you.

The patient or his/her representative will be told who to contact if not satisfied with the Network's handling of the grievance.

A follow up contact may be made at the end of the investigation. This contact is to find out if you are satisfied with the grievance process. It is your choice to participate in the follow up.

