

## I. PREFACE

### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Network 1, the Network of New England, made 2010 a year of innovation and continuation. The Network has continued to fulfill its mission “to facilitate the improvement of health care and quality of life for individuals who have chronic kidney disease and those treated with dialysis and transplantation”. Innovation has sparked new approaches to the measurement of quality of care delivered to individuals with ESRD, to the resolution of grievances among recipients and providers of dialysis and transplant care, and to the educational endeavors targeting patients and providers.

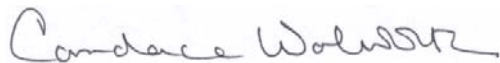
In 2010, as in previous years, the principal quality improvement project was that of Fistula First. The Network revised its previous foci and emphasized that all providers, irrespective of current AVR prevalence, must continue to improve to achieve the Network AVF goal. Each provider was assigned a specific AVF change goal and Network staff assisted facilities with their Quality Assessment Improvement Plans (QAIP) to identify individual strategies they could impact or influence. The 2009-2010 CMS assigned AVF Performance Goal for Network 1 was 58.2% and that was reached in March of 2010 at 58.8%. The concurrent emphasis on catheter reduction (Catheter Last) led to a 90 day catheter rate of 10.21% by December, 2010.

Clinical performance measures were reviewed in a new format to evaluate possible linkages among individual measures. The Network achieved further gains in seasonal immunization rates while a new tracking and documentation system expanded the Network’s approach to patient grievances and concerns.

The Network of New England continued its long commitment to education of recipients and providers of ESRD care. The Annual Meeting in October involved nearly 700 health care providers, patients, and members of industry. Content included renal palliative care, vascular access, transplantation, state surveyors “noted deficiencies”, and the impact of the Conditions of Coverage. The Annual Network Dialysis Technician Educational Meeting took place at 2 geographically central locations and featured presentations focusing on the technician’s role in vascular access, quality of care, and patient safety. Nearly 500 technicians attended one of the two meetings. And the Patient Advisory Committee (PAC) continued the development of innovative patient teaching tools.

Details of these and other Network activities are described in this Annual Report. These efforts would not have been achieved without the extraordinarily dedicated staff of Network 1 and its equally committed all volunteer professionals and patients who serve as members of the Medical Review Board (MRB), Board of Directors (MOB) and the subcommittees of Network 1.

Network 1 looks forward to the coming year of increased collaboration with sister Networks, Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs), State Survey Agencies and National Coalitions to achieve quality care for the ESRD/CKD community. Our challenges will include the impact of the new reimbursement methodology on access to all patients and the delivery of quality care with the anticipated Quality Incentive Program to begin in 2012. Network 1 will fulfill its mission and engage the challenges ahead with expertise, energy and excitement.



Candace Walworth, MD  
Network Chair

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**Network of New England  
Mission Statement**

The mission of the Network of New England is to facilitate the improvement of health care and quality of life for individuals who have chronic kidney disease and those treated with dialysis or transplantation

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