

A panel made up of renal community members and other medical professionals will meet as part of a Technical Expert Panel later this month to review the methodology used for the controversial 5-Star rating system for dialysis facilities.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) contracted with the University of Michigan Kidney Epidemiology and Cost Center (UM-KECC) to review the rating system, which was launched as part of the Dialysis Facility Compare website in January despite protests from the renal community.

CMS has been criticized because it did not involve the renal community in developing the methodology for the rating system and because the performance of dialysis clinics based on other quality measures doesn't match the 5-star ratings.

The 17-member panel will meet April 27-28 in Baltimore. Members include patients, dialysis providers, and outside professionals with expertise in statistics and public health.

- Paul T Conway, president of the American Association of Kidney Patients
- Joanna Y. Galeas, patient advocate, Renal Support Network
- Joseph D. Karan, patient advocate and director of Education, National Kidney Foundation of Florida
- Allen R. Nissenson, MD, chief medical officer, DaVita HealthCare Partners
- Franklin Maddux, MD, executive vice president for Clinical and Scientific Affairs, Fresenius Medical Care
- John (Jack) Reynolds, vice president and patient ambassador, Dialysis Patient Citizens
- Tonya L. Saffer, MPH, Senior Health Policy Director, NKF
- David M. White, chair on the Patient Advisory Committee and Medical Review Board member, Mid-Atlantic Renal Coalition
- Sumi Sun, MPH, director of Applied Research and Data Analysis, Satellite Healthcare

Researchers and biostatisticians on the panel include:

- Richard J. Cook, PhD, MS, Tier I Canada Research Chair (renewal) of Statistics and Actuarial Science, University of Waterloo
- J. Richard Landis, PhD, professor of Biostatistics and professor of Statistics at the

University of Pennsylvania (Wharton School)

- Jane F. Pendergast, PhD, professor of Biostatistics, Duke University
- Catherine Sugar, PhD, director of Semel Institute Statistics Core University of California, Los Angeles and associate professor for the Departments of Biostatistics, Statistics and Psychiatry, UCLA.

UM-KECC staff said additional conference calls may be held after the meeting with members to finalize recommendations.

More information, including the complete list of panel members, is available in the “downloads” section at the bottom of the CMS TEP website: <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/MMS/TechnicalExpertPanels.html>

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