

ASN News

ASN Launches Distance Learning

The American Society of Nephrology (ASN) continues to broaden its commitment to education and to the kidney professionals who help ASN lead the fight against kidney disease. ASN now offers distance learning opportunities that make it possible for nephrologists to advance their professional education anytime, anywhere.

ASN's Board Review Course & Update (BRCU) online mirrors the BRCU offered annually in San Francisco. Internationally renowned speakers lecture and participate in case presentations and panel discussions that blend physiology and pathophysiology with clinical discussions. BRCU is the primary preparatory course for the American Board of Internal Medicine's (ABIM) initial certification and maintenance of certification examinations in nephrology; each section is patterned after the ABIM nephrology examination blueprint (maximum 70 AMA PRA Category 1 credits).

On April 14, 2010, ASN launched

ASN Renal WeekEnds (RWE) Online. This comprehensive overview of Renal Week 2009 presents breakthroughs in research, as well as clinical and translational medicine summarized by experts in the field. Now ASN members can access key presentations on acute kidney injury, kidney transplantation, hypertension, end stage renal disease, glomerular disorders, and clinical nephrology from the office, at home, or while traveling (maximum 9.5 AMA PRA Category 1 credits).

These new offerings are just the beginning. ASN will expand its distance learning education programs and offer opportunities for members to update their professional skills at their convenience and pace. Check the ASN website for announcements about new distance learning programs. To access all ASN's distance learning opportunities, visit the ASN website at http://www.asn-online.org/education_and_meetings/distance-learning/

Policy Update

ASN Presents Remarks at Key CMS Meeting on ESA Usage

ASN was among a small group of invited presenters at the Medicare Evidence Development & Coverage Advisory Committee (MEDCAC) meeting to review available evidence on use of erythropoiesis-stimulating agents (ESAs) to manage anemia in patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD). MEDCAC provides independent guidance and expert advice to CMS on specific clinical topics.

Presenting on behalf of ASN, Wolfgang Winkelmayer, MD, ScD, FASN, delivered remarks at Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) headquarters in Baltimore last month.

"We derive from the available evidence that current ESAs may be dangerous if used for overly aggressive treatment targets compared with practices that are compatible with current treatment guidelines," Winkelmayer said. "Continued access to these medications is required, however, to give patients with CKD a fair chance at first receiving and then maintaining the function of a kidney transplant. Swift action is needed to support comparative effectiveness research that closes the evidence gap in the optimal role of ESAs in the treatment of relatively severe anemia and to more modest treatment targets while maintaining these patients transfusion-free."

ASN members Rajiv Agarwal, MD, MBBS, FASN; Daniel Coyne, MD; and Joseph Messana, MD, served as a guest panelists on the MEDCAC panel considering presenters' remarks and reviewing evidence.

Read a copy of the society's remarks at ASN's website at http://www.asn-online.org/policy_and_public_affairs/patient-care.aspx.

State Initiatives to Manage Diabetes on the Rise

States have taken several steps to ensure that diabetes patients are appropriately managed by private and public insurers alike. Forty-six states require insurers to have some sort of coverage for diabetes management. Typically this coverage includes direct treatment, as well as diabetes equipment and supplies. The National Conference of State Legislatures has put together an interactive map to highlight private insurance mandates, public insurance coverage, and state-based public prevention programs. The map and associated tables can be accessed at <http://tiny.cc/nysl>. The site also includes related legislation and links to state laws and regulations.

Looking for diabetes prevention and control programs in your state? The Centers for Disease Control has a list of links to state programs that can be accessed at <http://tiny.cc/cdc249>.

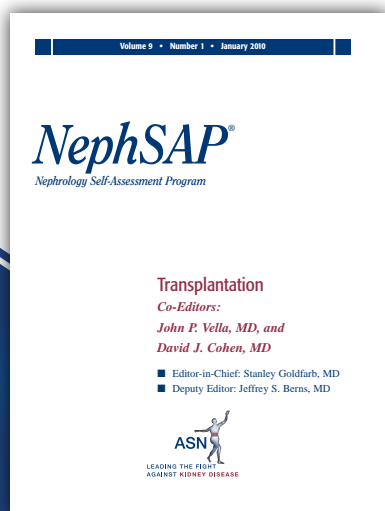
Want to know how much diabetes is costing your state? The American Diabetes Association can tell you at <http://tiny.cc/statecost>.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services included diabetes prevention for the Quality Improvement Organization's (QIO) 9th Statement of Work. QIOs work on a state level to improve health care services delivered to Medicare beneficiaries. Five states or jurisdictions were chosen to participate in the "Every Diabetic Counts" Program, an initiative to reduce health disparities among diabetes patients through diabetes self-management education: the District of Columbia, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, and New York. QIOs in these states are responsible for monitoring statewide diabetes rates and education efforts, and must submit the number of patients who complete self-management training on a monthly basis. To follow the progress of these and other Medicare Quality Improvement state initiatives, check out: www.cms.hhs.gov/qualityimprovementorgs/. To view and download the "Every Diabetic Counts" toolkit, visit <http://tiny.cc/EDC>.

Read a copy of the society's remarks at ASN's website at http://www.asn-online.org/policy_and_public_affairs/patient-care.aspx.

NephSAP

A Resource For CME and MOC*



Renew diagnostic and therapeutic skills.

Refresh clinical knowledge.

Earn CME credits and MOC points.

Access in both print and podcast (Audio NephSAP) formats.

NephSAP is a benefit of ASN membership. Learn more at www.asn-online.org/nephSAP

*American Board of Internal Medicine's Maintenance of Certification (MOC)

