July 29, 2010

To: Quality Improvement Organization CEO

Subject: Vascular Access Initiative

The undersigned organizations are writing to formally endorse the Vascular Access Initiative, a program outlined on the attached correspondence that is intended to maximize the number of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) and End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) hemodialysis patients with a permanent vascular access. We are calling for a new, systematic method for advancing appropriate access placement in CKD and ESRD patients. This initiative should assist you in your work for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) CKD pilot quality improvement project.

The success of such an effort will rely on the contributions of many providers who care for this patient population (such as hospitals, nephrologists, interventional nephrologists, vascular surgeons, and dialysis providers). We know you work collaboratively with local providers to make measurable improvements in health quality that benefit all patients.

The benefits of a successful effort will be enormous, and include but are not limited to:

- That patient care will be profoundly improved through the reduction of health care-associated infections and hospitalizations, as well as by the facilitation of the ESRD patient’s transition into a dialysis delivery modality.
- That effective implementation will enhance your partner hospitals’ ability to comply with requirements established by The Joint Commission and other organizations monitoring quality improvement efforts.
- That the health care system in general will benefit from more effective allocation of increasingly scarce fiscal resources.

For these reasons, the undersigned organizations strongly urge your QIO to support the efforts outlined on the attached document to improve the care provided to hemodialysis patients. Questions about this initiative should be directed to Robert Blaser, Director of Public Policy for the Renal Physicians Association (RPA) at 301-468-3515, or by email at rblaser@renalmd.org.

American Renal Associates
Centers for Dialysis Care
DaVita
Dialysis Clinic, Inc.
Fresenius Medical Care
Northwest Kidney Center
Renal Advantage
Renal Physicians Association
Renal Ventures
National Renal Administrators Association (NRAA)
The Forum of ESRD Networks