

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 22, 2022

The Honorable Chiquita Brooks-LaSure  
Administrator  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
7500 Security Blvd  
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Administrator Brooks-LaSure,

We write to you to share deeply concerning reports from our constituents who are concerned about access to lifesaving dialysis treatment. Dialysis treatment centers are experiencing increased staffing shortages, as well as supply chain issues for critical materials like dialysis fluid. We have heard from constituents who have been warned about reduced treatment times, potentially jeopardizing their long-term health. These issues are compounded by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the threat that it poses to dialysis patients.

As we continue to weather the economic impacts of the ongoing pandemic, we must ensure that comprehensive health care remains accessible to all Americans. We therefore urge CMS to investigate the impact of supply chain disruptions and staff shortages on dialysis treatment and report to Congress as to how we can best assist you in overcoming these challenges so that no patient has to face avoidable disruptions to their care.

Nearly 786,000 people in the United States are currently living with end-stage renal disease, more than 550,000 of whom are on dialysis.<sup>1</sup> As the Department of Health and Human Services works toward its goals of reducing the number of Americans developing end-stage renal disease by 25 percent by 2030; increasing the number of Americans receiving in-home dialysis or receiving a transplant to 80 percent by 2025; and doubling the number of kidneys available for transplant by 2030, it is imperative dialysis care remains safe and reliable.

We have an obligation to act in a manner that safeguards the health and wellness of all Americans. Congress remains ready to assist CMS by whatever means necessary to protect the care and treatment of our dialysis patients.

So that Congress can assist CMS in returning staffing numbers and treatment times to their previous levels, we request a response to the following questions no later than May 18, 2022:

1. By what percentage have treatment center job vacancies increased since the beginning of the pandemic?
2. What challenges have dialysate suppliers expressed to your agency? Where along the supply chain are points of concern?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-statistics/kidney-disease>.

3. Which states or regions are experiencing the most significant dialysate and staff shortages?
4. Since December 1, 2021, how many dialysis patients have received decreased infusion times? What is the average time decrease experienced by these patients?
5. How many clinics have been forced to divert the patients elsewhere? What is the average increase in travel distance diverted patients are facing?
6. Have there been any observed decreases in overall dialysis patient outcomes during this timeframe?
7. If patients are concerned or do not believe their treatment is adequate, has the agency set in place a contact or resources to assist these patients?

Thank you for your attention to this request. We look forward to working with you on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress



Joe Wilson  
Member of Congress



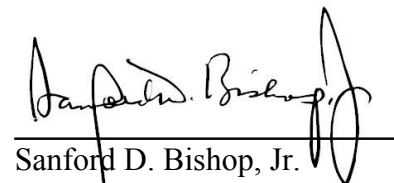
Aumua Amata Coleman  
Radewagen  
Member of Congress



William R. Timmons IV  
Member of Congress



Henry Cuellar  
Member of Congress

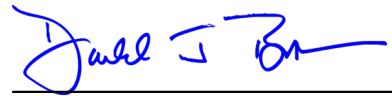


Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress



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Don Bacon  
Member of Congress



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Deborah K. Ross  
Member of Congress



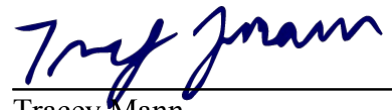
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Vicente Gonzalez  
Member of Congress



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Tony Gonzales  
Member of Congress



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Tracey Mann  
Member of Congress



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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



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Chris Jacobs  
Member of Congress



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Ronny L. Jackson, M.D.  
Member of Congress