



STATEMENT OF ENDORSEMENT

- WHEREAS: Vascular access is one of the most critical issues in improving the quality of dialysis because it is a major determinant of patient outcomes as well as financial expenditures. Most vascular access-related morbidity and costs are associated with the use of grafts and catheters. Recent trends show a decrease in access patency, an increase in morbidity/mortality, and an increase in the cost of care for dialysis patients, that may be in large part attributable to the low prevalence of functional AV fistulas for maintenance hemodialysis.
- WHEREAS: Costs for access-related complications are estimated to have increased to more than two billion dollars per year (~\$8k/patient). More than 20% of the hemodialysis patient hospital days are related to vascular access dysfunction; however, patients with AV fistulas have a significantly lower relative risk of hospitalization and surgery than patients with AV grafts.
- WHEREAS: CMS, ESRD Networks, the renal community, and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) are working collaboratively to increase the likelihood that every patient will receive the most appropriate and optimal access, and specifically an AV fistula where indicated and feasible. Optimal access, coupled with proper cannulation, appropriate access monitoring and proactive intervention, will decrease vascular access complications and improve patient outcomes and survival.
- THEREFORE: The **undersigned organizations** endorse the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' National Vascular Access Improvement Initiative and encourages its members to support and participate in the Networks' *Fistula First* Projects.

American Association of Kidney Patients	American Kidney Fund	American Nephrology Nurses Association
American Society of Diagnostic and Interventional Nephrology	American Society of Hypertension	American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology	Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services	DaVita
Forum of ESRD Networks	Fresenius Medical Care	Gambro Health Care
Life Options	National Association of Nephrology Technicians	National Institute of Health
National Kidney Foundation	Renal Care Group	Renal Physicians Association
Society of Interventional Radiology		Society for Vascular Surgery and American Vascular Association Foundation

