



# Newsletter

Southern California Renal Disease Council, Inc. • ESRD Network 18 March 9, 2004

Volume 2

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## “CHAMPIONS CORNER”

In this new column, we'd like to spotlight (and thank) the many physicians out in our region who have either done great work in promoting AV Fistula usage, or are currently working hard as “champions” for the Fistula First project. These are individuals that you, the facilities, let us know about, and we appreciate it. Some of our local “heroes” are:

- Dr. Sidney Glazer, Vascular Surgeon  
*Kaiser Anaheim Medical Center*
- Dr. Robert Kopelman, Nephrologist  
*Bakersfield Dialysis Center*
- Dr. John Robertson, Nephrologist  
*DaVita Riverside Dialysis Center*
- Dr. Allen Nissenon, Nephrologist  
*DaVita UCLA (adult) Dialysis Center*
- Dr. Joshua Greenstein, Nephrologist  
*Gambro Escondido*
- Dr. David Cloyd, Dr. Riaz Bokhari,  
Dr. Anatoly Bulkin—Vascular Surgeons  
*Palomar Hospital*
- Dr. Niren Angle, Vascular Surgeon  
*University of California, San Diego*

If you have a nephrologist, vascular surgeon or radiologist/interventionist you'd like to highlight, please contact Lana Kacherova or Vickie Peters at the ESRD Network 18 office!

## NEW WEBSITE COMING!

In late March, there will be a new national website going up where all facilities (and patients) can access information on the Fistula First project. One of the main features of this website will be the Fistula First “Tool Kit” of project resources, including sample forms, sample job descriptions and procedures, reference articles and other items of interest that are free and downloadable. Watch for future announcements from the Network.

## CALLING ALL FISTULA PATIENTS!

As part of the patient education component of this project, we are currently running a “contest” to find the ESRD hemodialysis patient with the oldest functioning AV Fistula in Network 18! Some other Networks have also done this contest; the oldest known AVF in the country identified so far has been working for 33 consecutive years! So please spread the word in your facility, to see if there are any long-time fistula patients who would like to

be recognized. Some of these patients would also make great “AVF champions” to help spread the word to other patients in the facility and/or region. If you have any interested patients, please contact the Network staff!

## SUCCESS STORIES: “WHAT WORKS”

Another ongoing column we're starting here is to spotlight some strategies or “change elements” facilities have successfully tried or implemented to improve their AVF rates within their vascular access programs. Some recent examples include:

- One nurse manager in Network 18 also works as an acute nurse in the local hospital. He found that by working directly with new ESRD patients and vascular surgeons to encourage AV Fistula placement, he's been able to positively impact his facility's overall AVF rates! If your facility hasn't made contact with the acute dialysis nurses in your local medical centers yet, this could be a great group to partner up with during this project!

- Dr. Lawrence Spergel, vascular surgeon and medical director of the Fistula First/NVAII project, has emphasized that placing an AV Fistula during the incident ESRD patient's initial hospitalization saves time, money, and patient/staff energy. Diagnostic testing procedures (e.g. vessel mapping, venography, scans, etc.) are covered better for inpatients, and if the patient is discharged to a chronic center, it may take an additional (five) 5 months (or more) for them to actually get an AV Fistula placed! Keep this in mind when reviewing the “change concepts” for your facility.

- One nurse manager has empowered her CHTs to play an important role in the Vascular Access Management process. Each technician has a very simple report that they complete every week that gathers input on their patients' accesses. Then the Vascular Access Manager (RN) or an Access Technician (new CHT position in this facility) can review them quickly and pull out problematic patients and those with catheter/fistula combos to address as a priority. According to the nurse manager, this has been working very well, since it also allows patient care staff to play a more significant role and providing greater job satisfaction. If you want a copy of this form please contact Lana Kacherova or Vickie Peters at the ESRD Network 18 office.