

## Helpful Resources

### United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS)

Information and pamphlets about organ donation and transplant, transplant waiting lists and statistical information

Toll free phone number: 1-888-894-6361

Website: [www.unos.org](http://www.unos.org)

### National Kidney Foundation

Information and resources on kidney disease and transplant

Website: [www.kidney.org](http://www.kidney.org)

### Coalition on Donation

Information on how to become an organ and tissue donor

Phone number: 1-804-782-4920

Website: [www.shareyourlife.org](http://www.shareyourlife.org)



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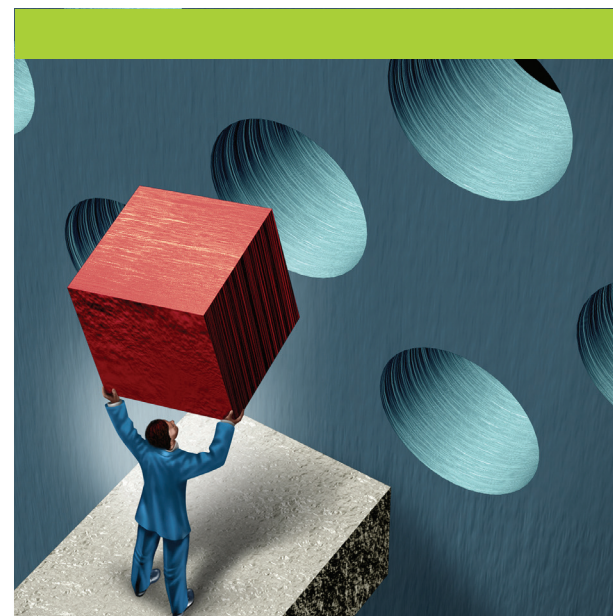
(610) 265-2418

(610) 783-0374 (Fax)

(800) 548-9205 (Patient Toll-Free Line)

[www.qirn4.org](http://www.qirn4.org)

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## Understanding **CHALLENGES**

*A Guide to Understanding the  
Challenges of a Kidney  
Transplant Evaluation and  
Workup*



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People considering a kidney transplant are often overwhelmed by the multiple steps involved. For dialysis providers, the challenge becomes even bigger, because different transplant centers often evaluate patients differently. Ultimately, the goal of every evaluation is to ensure that kidney transplantation is a safe form of treatment for a patient's End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD).

## Why are there so many appointments for the evaluation?

Transplantation is a complex procedure. Transplant centers must provide patients with the education necessary to understand the entire process, including: risks and benefits of transplant; alternative treatments to transplant; testing necessary to be considered a candidate; surgical risks; post-transplant management; and the list goes on. Patients are often overwhelmed with the amount of information they receive. For this reason, it's best to give information in a more manageable way. This usually requires several appointments at the transplant center and reinforcement through telephone calls.

## Why are tests ordered at different times?

Often tests are ordered by priority in which they occur for the patient. For example, if

the patient has cardiac risk factors that may prevent him or her from being a transplant candidate, the cardiac workup will be scheduled first. This is done so that the patient does not have to undergo multiple "routine" tests if they are found to be ineligible for transplant based on the cardiac testing.

## Can diagnostic tests for transplant be done at the local hospital?

This depends on the transplant center's preference. Many centers do require testing to be completed at the transplant center, or an affiliated outpatient center, because it allows the provider to get the results in a timely manner. If testing is done outside the transplant center, the results may not be sent quickly to the transplant center. When this happens, transplant center staff spend a significant amount of time trying to get the records. This can delay patients getting placed on the transplant list.

Another major reason to have testing done at the transplant center is the billing process. Transplant billing is very specialized. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has regulatory requirements for transplant evaluation testing. CMS requires that all bills for the transplant evaluation be sent to the transplant center. When tests are performed outside the transplant center, they often get billed incorrectly because most local hospitals do not understand transplant billing requirements. Unfortunately, bills

usually get sent to the patient's insurance instead of being sent to the transplant center. This can create additional steps to rectify the situation and the patient usually gets stuck in the middle. This issue rarely occurs when patients have testing done at the transplant center.

## How can dialysis staff help patients move through the process?

Encourage patients to be proactive in their evaluation. Help them create and maintain good communication with transplant center staff. Encourage patients to keep scheduled appointments and ask questions. The more a patient knows about the process, the less cumbersome it becomes. As an advocate for your patients, you can help them be successful with transplant.

