

## Report in Brief

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
**OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**



### Why OIG Did This Audit

End-stage renal disease (ESRD) is a medical condition in which a person's kidneys permanently cease functioning, leading to the need for a regular course of long-term dialysis or a kidney transplant to maintain life. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that beneficiaries with serious underlying medical conditions, such as ESRD, are at a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Health care personnel are also some of the most at-risk essential workers.

Our objective was to determine whether selected dialysis companies implemented additional infection control policies and procedures in accordance with Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and certain CDC guidance to protect high-risk ESRD beneficiaries during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### How OIG Did This Audit

Our audit covered 9 dialysis companies that owned 6,451 facilities (83 percent) of the 7,813 ESRD facilities that had a Medicare or Medicaid certification at any point during 2020 in 50 States, the District of Columbia, Guam, and Puerto Rico. Our findings are based on responses to a questionnaire and followup interviews that we conducted with nine dialysis companies.

## Selected Dialysis Companies Implemented Additional Infection Control Policies and Procedures To Protect Beneficiaries and Employees During the COVID-19 Pandemic

### What OIG Found

The nine selected dialysis companies surveyed (representing 83 percent of the ESRD facilities that had a Medicare or Medicaid certification at any point during 2020) implemented additional infection control policies and procedures in accordance with CMS and CDC recommendations to protect high-risk ESRD beneficiaries and employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. We found all nine companies had infection control policies and procedures in place to protect beneficiaries and employees, and when recommended by CMS and CDC, the companies implemented additional policies and procedures. However, while two companies provided education about the importance of hand hygiene, they did not emphasize the importance of hand hygiene immediately before and after any contact with a facemask or cloth face covering, as recommended by CDC.

### What OIG Recommends

Because the nine selected companies implemented additional infection control policies and procedures as recommended by CMS and CDC, this report contains no recommendations.