

## Florida Renal Association

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### 2026 Kidney Day Legislative Issues

#### **SUPPORT: Social Worker Licensure Compact**

*HB 13 (Rep. Hunschofsky) | SB 74 (Sen. Harrell)*

The Florida Renal Association (FRA) supports Florida joining the Social Work Licensure Compact. This compact recognizes social workers as essential members of the dialysis care team and allows eligible social workers to practice across participating states under a single license. The bills also establish participation requirements and create the Social Work Licensure Compact Commission, supporting workforce flexibility and patient access to care.

#### **SUPPORT: Increasing Living Organ Donations**

*HB 493 (Rep. Berfield) | SB 390 (Sen. Harrell)*

FRA supports legislation to increase living organ donation by addressing missed work during donor surgery and recovery—one of the most common barriers to the gift of life.

- Provides 30 days of paid administrative leave for state employees.
- Provides 30 days of unpaid leave for other Florida employees.

In 2024, Florida performed 1,734 kidney transplants, yet only 361 (20%) were from living donors. Nearly 5,000 Floridians remain on the transplant waiting list. This minimal state fiscal impact would save lives.

#### **OPPOSE: Ending Vaccine Mandates**

FRA is concerned that ending vaccine mandates would place dialysis and kidney transplant patients at immediate and disproportionate risk. Dialysis patients are among the most vulnerable: immune-compromised and receiving treatment in shared clinical spaces three times per week. Transplant candidates may face delays, and transplant recipients depend on strong community vaccination rates for protection. Without proactive measures, Florida could see more preventable hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths in this population.

#### **SUPPORT: Expanded Use of Home Dialysis Modalities**

FRA supports expanded access to peritoneal dialysis and home hemodialysis when clinically appropriate. FRA hosts an annual educational webinar with the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), as directed by budget proviso language, for Medicaid Managed Care plans on the cost savings and patient benefits of home dialysis. If a patient starts directly on home modalities, they are immediately eligible for Medicare, creating cost avoidance for Florida Medicaid. FRA supports additional funding for home dialysis education and coverage for self-administration of erythropoiesis-stimulating agents (ESAs).

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### **SUPPORT: Improved & Accountable Transportation Options**

Consistent and timely transportation is critical for in-center dialysis patients who require three treatments per week, often lasting up to four hours each. Many patients rely on transportation services covered by their insurance, yet these services are frequently unreliable, resulting in long waits or missed treatments. Transportation barriers contribute to avoidable hospitalizations and preventable healthcare costs and are also a key reason home dialysis options should be expanded when appropriate.

### **SUPPORT: Food Is Medicine**

When ESRD leads to dialysis, Registered Dietitians are vital members of the interdisciplinary care team, providing evidence-based nutrition management that improves outcomes. FRA supports the “Food is Medicine” concept and a Medicaid pilot to cover purchases and delivery of prescribed, health-promoting foods. FRA also supports efforts to eliminate food deserts by advancing solutions that increase access to nutritious foods through small-footprint grocery stores in underserved rural and urban communities.

### **SUPPORT: Pharmaceutical / Drug Coverage**

FRA encourages AHCA to support Medicaid coverage of self-administered ESAs for ESRD patients on home dialysis. Medicare already recognizes the cost savings and benefits of self-administered ESAs, which reduce transportation needs, improve outcomes, decrease hospitalizations, and reduce the need for blood transfusions. As federal focus increasingly emphasizes home dialysis, Medicaid coverage is essential to support patients and reduce overall healthcare costs.

### **OTHER ISSUES**

- Third-Party Payment of Insurance Premiums – FRA supports continuation of premium assistance programs; disruption could increase Medicaid enrollment for ESRD services.
- Medi-Gap – Florida was a national leader in allowing Medi-Gap coverage for disabled and ESRD patients under age 65; FRA supports continuation.
- Medicaid Program Fee Increase – FRA supports raising Medicaid reimbursements to equal Medicare rates to ensure access and sustainability.