



CONNECTIONS

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 4



ACCOUNTABILITY IS YOUR FRIEND

By Stephen Pirri, President and COO

Depending on your point of view the phrase, “accountability is your friend” will seem either threatening because it hints at taking away excuses or comforting because it puts the ball squarely in your court. You can control how you react to situations and what actions you take.

I argue that accountability is comforting because it takes the “they” out of the equation and gives us responsibility for what we can do and how we do it. We can stop worrying about waiting for other people and avoid these questions:

- When are *they* going to do their jobs?
- Why don't *they* communicate better?
- *Who* dropped the ball?

Effective leadership and management can help shape the environment that supports “what can I do?” Protocols, procedures and guidelines are important parts of such an environment. They can sometimes seem like a lot of unnecessary red tape. But I challenge you to think differently about them. Protocols, procedures and guidelines support our group efforts to ensure that our patients receive the best, most effective care day after day after day.

All of us want to do a good job. And most days and under most situations we can do it. But when we are under stress or have a new situation our own personal knowledge and behavior can suffer. Protocols, guidelines and procedures are our safety net, our backup process.

As center staff, we are accountable to each other and to our patients to stay on schedule, open on time, and give treatments for the right amount of time. Most importantly, we are responsible for the quality of patients’ care. We do not have control over their lives at home or work but we have absolute control over the quality of care they receive in our centers. We must take that seriously and rise to the occasion. ■

IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 2

> An Insider’s View

PAGE 3

> Commitment to Good Management leads to an Award Winning Center

PAGE 4

> Fourth Quarter Anniversary Milestones

PAGE 5

> Benefits Corner

PAGE 6-7

> Juggling Change
> Annual Meeting Photos

PAGE 8

> Annual Meeting Award Recipients
> 2008 Dates to Remember

AN INSIDER'S VIEW

By Donna Miller

“The key is survival. I was sick and disabled, but I still had a way to live,” says Kaylynne Duran, Laredo South’s center administrator. Dialysis means life.



From that personal realization, Ms. Duran knew she wanted to be a nephrology nurse. As a two-time kidney transplant recipient, she knows first-hand what it takes to help people with kidney disease.

Ms. Duran discovered during her first semester in college that she had high blood pressure. She was attending an anatomy and physiology course, and the professor checked her blood pressure as a demonstration. He noticed it was very high for someone her age and suggested she go to a doctor. She did. She was okay for ten years controlling her high blood pressure with diet and medicine but by the age of 29 needed a kidney transplant.

Prior to needing the transplant, she had followed up on her goal to work in nephrology care. She started in 1993 as a patient care technician and worked at that position for almost nine years. While working as a PCT she received her first kidney transplant. Ms. Duran then decided to go to nursing school. She wanted to be able to care for others that found themselves in the same situation as she was. While in nursing school she rejected the kidney and had to go on hemodialysis.

Her college professors worked with her and gave her time to catch up on assignments that she had missed during the kidney rejection. She finally graduated as

an RN and was hired at the clinic where she was receiving dialysis. She filled out the job application while on a dialysis machine. It was a hard schedule. She had dialysis from 5 to 9 o'clock in the morning, took a break and then worked the evening shift. Ms. Duran received her next transplant in 2005.

Ms. Duran only recently became the Laredo South center administrator. The center started with one patient and now has 47 hemodialysis and 3 peritoneal patients. She is still learning about being an administrator. She concentrates on running a safe center for the patients and the staff. Ms. Duran knows she can learn from other administrators, receive good advice and be reassured that Laredo South’s challenges are the same as other centers.

To Ms. Duran, working as a dialysis center administrator is a personal matter. “I meet these beautiful people who have such good attitudes. I want to be a part of it. The nurses that cared for me and the ones I now work with are so patient. We all have our obstacles, but we go on.” ■



Claudia Palacios, RN



Cesar Hernandez, PCT



Gerardo Gaitan, BMT



Pedro Dealba, LVN



Laredo South team pictured left to right: (Back Row) Sylvia Trevino, LMSW; Yeannette Mendoza, LMSW (Harlingen); Dr. Monette Regalado; Claudia Iruegas, RN; Jaime Salazar, regional director; Kaylynne Duran, RN; and Gerardo Gaitan, BMT (Front Row) Jillian Esparza, unit clerk; and Claudia Palacios, RN

COMMITMENT TO GOOD MANAGEMENT LEADS TO AN AWARD WINNING CENTER

By Donna Miller

Clara Gilder, center administrator for North Fort Worth, says, “My biggest challenge as an administrator has been getting out in front of potential problems and keeping everyone happy.” She must be very good at her job.



*Clara Gilder, RN, UA,
North Fort Worth center
administrator*

The North Fort Worth Center was honored during the recent September company-wide meeting with two awards: Best Anemia Outcomes, for demonstrating excellence and outstanding performance, and Best Overall Quality Outcomes, for exceptional accomplishments and outstanding achievements. The Center also recruited the most participants for the National Kidney Walk in October 2007. Ms. Gilder is not satisfied. Her goal for next year is to also earn the National Kidney Walk award for “most funds raised.”

Ms. Gilder has been in nursing twenty-five years. She has been the center administrator at North Fort Worth since it opened six years ago and an administrator at another facility for eight years. Helping her patients get better is important to her. She knows a critical component of that is running a good facility and a good facility needs talented and motivated staff members.

Ms. Gilder values her team. She says that, “we all try to work as a team. We have a lot of people who are really talented and hard-working and love their jobs. In nephrology nursing our patients are here long-term, so we know everyone needs to feel comfortable and needed.”



Ms. Gilder is a native of the Fort Worth area, graduating from Eastern Hills High School and nursing school at Tarrant County College. After a time as staff nurse at Arlington Memorial she was recruited as a chemist for PepsiCo where she says, “I learned a lot about quality assurance.”

Commitment to management, working as a team and putting patients first has resulted in an excellent facility. Ms. Gilder, though, has another reason for satisfaction, “What I like best is that the patients are so happy and grateful for their care. We are like a family here.” ■



*Dr. Anderson, medical director,
enjoyed the festivities at the
2007 Kidney Walk.*



More than 50 people represented the North Fort Worth center in the October 13, 2007 Kidney Walk.

FOURTH QUARTER ANNIVERSARY MILESTONES

Congratulations to those of you who reached milestones of 1, 3, 5, 10, 15 or 20 years of service this quarter. Some of you came to the USRC team through acquisition of your company. We have grandfathered your service years and welcome you.

| Employee Name | Division | Location | Seniority Date | Years of Service |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------------|
| JOHNSON, FELISHA S | U.S. Renal Care, Inc. | DALLAS CORPORATE | 12/26/2006 | 1 |
| KENNON, KATRINA | USRC North Texas | ARLINGTON | 12/21/2006 | 1 |
| JAMISON, PAUL | U.S. Renal Care, Inc. | PARAGOULD | 12/13/2006 | 1 |
| RIDDLE, KATHERINE | USRC North Texas | FORT WORTH | 12/11/2006 | 1 |
| HOLLIDAY, PATRESE | U.S. Renal Care, Inc. | DALLAS CORPORATE | 12/4/2006 | 1 |
| MORRIS, YOLANDA | U.S. Renal Care, Inc. | DALLAS CORPORATE | 12/4/2006 | 1 |
| BRADFIELD, SCOTT | USRC North Texas | NORTH FORT WORTH | 12/4/2006 | 1 |
| PEREZ, REBECA | USRC South Texas | HARLINGEN | 12/4/2006 | 1 |
| RIVERA, MARTHA | USRC South Texas | MID VALLEY WESLACO | 11/27/2006 | 1 |
| ROMO, TOMAS | USRC San Antonio | GATEWAY | 11/27/2006 | 1 |
| SALAZAR, DAVID | USRC San Antonio | HOUSTON STREET | 11/15/2006 | 1 |
| COUNTRYMAN, TONYA | U.S. Renal Care, Inc. | DALLAS CORPORATE | 11/6/2006 | 1 |
| DELAROSA, SEGISMUNDO | USRC North Texas | GRAND PRAIRIE | 11/6/2006 | 1 |
| GEORGE, MARIAMMA | USRC North Texas | GRAND PRAIRIE | 11/6/2006 | 1 |
| MEDINA, EDWARD | USRC South Texas | VALLEY MCALLEN | 11/6/2006 | 1 |
| KENNELLY JR, DENNIS A | U.S. Renal Care, Inc. | DALLAS CORPORATE | 11/1/2006 | 1 |
| MCDOWELL, LAUREN E | U.S. Renal Care, Inc. | DALLAS CORPORATE | 10/30/2006 | 1 |
| ONTIVEROS, MARIA | U.S. Renal Care, Inc. | DALLAS CORPORATE | 10/30/2006 | 1 |
| FLOWERS, SANDRA | USRC North Texas | ARLINGTON | 10/30/2006 | 1 |
| MAGNUSON, JAMES | U.S. Renal Care, Inc. | DALLAS CORPORATE | 10/23/2006 | 1 |
| MALUGEN, DARVIN | U.S. Renal Care, Inc. | DALLAS CORPORATE | 10/23/2006 | 1 |
| JOSEPH, JEENA | USRC North Texas | ARLINGTON | 10/23/2006 | 1 |
| HADAD, SUMAIA | USRC North Texas | NORTH RICHLAND HILLS | 10/23/2006 | 1 |
| LOVERN, ANITA | USRC North Texas | NORTH FORT WORTH | 10/30/2006 | 1 |
| HERNANDEZ, SANDRA | USRC South Texas | MISSION | 10/17/2006 | 1 |
| NEISS, NANCY | USRC North Texas | MANSFIELD | 10/16/2006 | 1 |
| BRENT, GENEVIEVE | USRC North Texas | SOUTH FORT WORTH | 10/24/2006 | 1 |
| MARTINEZ, REYNALDO | USRC South Texas | ELSA | 10/16/2006 | 1 |
| HERNANDEZ, DAVID | USRC South Texas | MCALLEN | 10/16/2006 | 1 |
| BARRIOS, GREGORIO | USRC San Antonio | MEDINA | 10/11/2006 | 1 |
| MILLER, SUSAN R | U.S. Renal Care, Inc. | DALLAS CORPORATE | 10/16/2006 | 1 |
| DEGOLLADO, ANA | USRC South Texas | VALLEY MCALLEN | 10/3/2006 | 1 |
| GONZALEZ, RODOLFO | USRC South Texas | MID VALLEY WESLACO | 12/20/2004 | 3 |
| WESLEY, YVONNE | USRC SE Arkansas | PINE BLUFF | 12/13/2004 | 3 |
| GOMEZ, MAYDA | USRC South Texas | RIO GRANDE | 12/6/2004 | 3 |
| COLE, MELINDA | U.S. Renal Care, Inc. | DALLAS CORPORATE | 11/22/2004 | 3 |
| HINOJOSA, SUSAN | USRC South Texas | BANDERA | 11/22/2004 | 3 |
| MARTINEZ, MARIA | USRC South Texas | HARLINGEN | 11/8/2004 | 3 |
| KHAN, CHONA | USRC San Antonio | BANDERA | 11/3/2004 | 3 |
| MUJICA, IDALIA E | USRC South Texas | MISSION | 10/27/2004 | 3 |
| PADRON, CLEMENTINA | USRC South Texas | SAN BENITO | 11/1/2004 | 3 |
| FALCON JR, VIDAL | USRC South Texas | RIO GRANDE | 10/15/2004 | 3 |
| VARUGHESE, THRESA | USRC North Texas | GRAND PRAIRIE | 10/11/2004 | 3 |
| MENDEZ, MARY | USRC San Antonio | BANDERA | 10/14/2004 | 3 |
| CAMPOS, YANIRA | USRC South Texas | HARLINGEN | 10/4/2004 | 3 |
| BLANCARTE, HILDA | USRC North Texas | NORTH FORT WORTH | 10/11/2004 | 3 |
| LOPEZ, ORLANDO | USRC South Texas | MISSION | 10/15/2004 | 3 |
| SALDANA, AUDREY | USRC South Texas | ELSA | 10/4/2004 | 3 |
| MOHAN, SHANTI | USRC North Texas | MANSFIELD | 12/20/2002 | 5 |
| GALVAN, TONI | USRC North Texas | TARRANT COUNTY PD | 12/2/2002 | 5 |
| MONTEMAYOR, FANY | USRC South Texas | VALLEY MCALLEN | 12/13/2002 | 5 |
| BENJAMIN, ROSALYN | USRC North Texas | SOUTH FORT WORTH | 11/25/2002 | 5 |
| BARGE, VIRGINIA | USRC North Texas | NORTH FORT WORTH | 10/17/2002 | 5 |
| PHILIP, ELSY | USRC North Texas | NORTH TEXAS REGIONAL | 11/2/1987 | 20 |

BENEFITS CORNER

For any benefits questions, please contact Mia Gatlin, benefits coordinator, at (972) 367-6220 or mgatlin@usrenalcare.com.

BENEFITS HOTLINE

Do you have a question about your employee benefits? Call our Benefits Hotline, 1-866-252-8671, for live help with benefits questions. Hotline hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. central standard time. ■

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JUGGLING CHANGE

By Donna Miller

“Our goals for our first annual meeting were to cover business, convey information and, most importantly, create cohesion among our employees and help us all become part of U.S. Renal Care instead of an amalgamation of different companies with different cultures and ways of doing things,” said Tom Weinberg, senior vice president and general counsel.

The meeting held this last September at the Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center and attended by center administrators, regional management and home office management focused on three initiatives:

- Growing Our Business
- Healthy Patients
- Resource Management

The senior management team led presentations on all aspects of the business including clinical priorities and accomplishments, financial updates and legal compliance duties and implementation plans.

Building teamwork, creating a cohesive corporate culture and handling rapid change were also goals for the meeting. To work on these, the planners called upon an unusual presenter. Carlo Pellegrini, a guest presenter, began his adult life as a circus juggler, and he thinks the act of juggling has much to teach.

Learning how to juggle and learning how to merge different company cultures seem like two very different things at first glance. But the planners for U.S. Renal Care’s first company-wide meeting knew that “learning” was the key word. “Nobody knew how to juggle at first. We all started out in the same situation,” says Karen Walton, vice president of clinical services. “We had to start gradually with one ball, then add another ball and finally move to three balls. The

message was to learn how to handle new situations and learn new ways of doing things. It was helpful both professionally and personally. Change is manageable.”

Interaction across groups was crucial to developing a corporate whole. Gradually people began to get a sense of one company instead of four different sets of centers in San Antonio, South Texas, Arkansas and Tarrant County. During the meetings and at informal lunches and dinners, people had opportunities to meet each other and share ideas. They learned that their problems are similar and that there are company resources to help them. The medical directors from the centers were also there, and they began to see the center administrators as part of a larger team.

“Little by little we spent time together and got to know each other as one company that was coming together and developing its own culture. We’re new, we’re young and we have the ability to shape our own future,” said Mr. Weinberg.

The closing banquet included an unexpected awards presentation (see page 8 for a list of Award Recipients.) There was genuine surprise and excitement among the winners, and camaraderie and pleasure from their peers, plus a little bit of competitive ribbing. “Next year when we have this meeting, we want our center to win,” was a frequent comment. ■



Juggler, Carlo Pellegrini, performs at the September 2007 Annual Meeting.



2007 ANNUAL MEETING
September 2007
Gaylord Texan Resort



2007 AWARD RECIPIENTS

The following awards were presented at the 2007 Annual Meeting in September. Next year's awards will be based on results from January-December 2008. Congratulations and job well done!

Best Adequacy (January-July 2007)
USRC Maverick County

Most Improved Adequacy (January-July 2007)
USRC Paragould

Best PTH (January-July 2007)
USRC Medina

Most Improved PTH (January-July 2007)
USRC Gateway

Best Anemia (January-July 2007)
USRC North Forth Worth

Most Improved Anemia (January-July 2007)
USRC McGehee

Best Overall Quality Outcomes (January-July 2007)
USRC North Fort Worth

Best Overall Quality Outcomes (January-July 2007)
USRC San Antonio PD

Best Overall Labor Cost/Treatment (January-June 2007)
USRC Valley McAllen

Most Improved Labor Cost/Treatment
(January-June 2007)
USRC Paragould

Most Improved Clinical Labor Hours (May-July 2007)
USRC Pine Bluff

Best Employee Retention (January-July 2007)
USRC Maverick County

Best Employee Retention (January-July 2007)
USRC Tarrant County PD

Best Employee Retention (January-July 2007)
USRC Bandera Road

Best Same Center Treatment Growth
(Q1 2006 and Q1 2007)
USRC Mission

Best Same Center Treatment Growth
(Q1 2006 and Q1 2007)
USRC Pleasanton Road ■

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

We are aggressively looking at growing USRC through joint ventures with physicians. Should you come in contact with any opportunities to partner with physicians either through the building of a new center(s) or the partial acquisition of an existing center(s) anywhere in the US, please contact **Larry Sultenfuss, vice president of business development at 210-621-4840.** ■

2008 DATES TO REMEMBER

National Nurses Week, May 6 - 12

Nephrology Professionals Week, Sept 14 - 20 ■



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