

# Silver Award Project Utility

**Facility:** Dialysis Clinic, Inc--Mexico  
**Silver Award User:** Marianne Meyer

**Project Status:** Active

## 1. Description of Project:

Mexico has had difficulty with phosphorus control as reported in our monthly QAPI meetings. Graphs show inconsistent adherence with a roller coaster type effect up one month and down the next. The patients were divided into three "teams". MWF morning and afternoon shifts were two teams and the TTHS shifts together were the third team. Each team of patients had an education team of one RN and two PCT's. The RDN developed 6 weekly education topics with a packet of related handouts. The topics in weekly order were: 1) What is Phosphorus? 2) High Phosphorus Foods 3) Food Additives. How Dangerous Are They? 4) Phosphorus Binders 5) Complications of High Phosphorus 6) Putting It All Together. Each team of nurses provided education to their respective team of patients during their treatments. Along with the packets, patients also received a binder holder and a magnifying glass to read labels and identify phosphorus additives in the ingredient list. Monthly phosphorus was drawn and redraws were done two weeks later for those that were not within 2.6-5.5 on the first draw. The winning team was the team that showed the greatest improvement in their phosphorus level even if they did not reach goal. The reason for the "improvement" measurement is that many of our patients will never reach "normal" phosphorus levels. We were looking for the team with the greatest overall improvement in their phosphorus level. The winning team each received a bagged chair.

## 2. Outcomes Measured:

A baseline phosphorus level was recorded on the last lab draw of January 2024. Weekly education started the first of February and continued into the second week of March. Labs were drawn four times during our recording period. The percentage of those meeting phosphorus goal was recorded on a team poster that was visible in the hallway outside the clinic.

## 3. Summary of Outcomes/Results:

We were looking for overall phosphorus improvement. Team One was at a disadvantage. Their phosphorus levels were stellar from the start, so they had little room for improvement. Team Three was very stable with little change or improvement in their phosphorus levels during the measurement period. However, Team Two had the best overall improvement. While some of the patients did not reach normal phosphorus levels during the duration of the project, several of them saw a significant decrease in their phosphorus level over the two-month period. One patient saw his phosphorus level improve by 5.3 mg% (12.7 mg% to 7.4 mg%). It was an accomplishment for him to decrease phosphorus that much. Other patients also showed significant improvement in phosphorus levels, as well. Since starting the project, QAPI goal of 60% or greater has been met consistently.

## 4. Impact on Patients:

The patients were receptive to the education they received in the clinic. They were reminded of phosphorus by the strategic placement of education flyers taped to the TV's and window paintings on the large windows in the clinic. The theme of the project was "Strive for Five" and was the mantra that the patients continue to hear every lab draw! The patients were also excited to compete with each other and would anxiously await the posting of their respective team results. As previously mentioned, the patients on the winning team were proud of the improvements in their phosphorus levels, even though they did not reach goal of 5.5. Many of the patients continue to use the phosphorus binder holder that was given to them during week four. All new patients in the clinic will receive a binder holder until supplies run out.

## 5. Lessons Learned:

The goal of this project was "improvement" not necessarily reaching the goal. So many projects that we have done in the past focused on getting lab values or weight gains below a certain level. In other words, we want them to be perfect. Many of our patients cannot or will not be perfect. For them to reach that goal sometimes seems impossible so they don't even try. This project was about improving phosphorus levels, not just getting it to the goal of 5.5. As mentioned previously, Team One was at a disadvantage because that group of patients are adherent to their diet and binder regimen. Team Two had several patients who may not have tried if they had to compete against the best (Team One). However, when they discovered that they had a chance to win even if they didn't get phosphorus controlled, they became excited and competitive during the project. That resulted in improvement in several of the patient's phosphorus levels. So, the biggest take away for this project is that success can be measured many ways and it doesn't necessarily mean being "perfect". Improvements, ever so small, can mean a lot to someone who doesn't feel like they will ever have a chance to win.