

ESRD NETWORK 13

Serving Arkansas, Louisiana & Oklahoma Renal Communities



Dear Southern Louisiana Dialysis / Transplant Providers:
(Medical Directors, Nurse Managers, & Facility Administrators)

This email to provide available information and resources in regards to the Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Louisiana state officials are stressing that there is “no risk to water systems” at present. Having said that, all dialysis providers should continue to monitor your dialysis and water systems as per your routine. Please note that any disruption in normal water supply and/or maintenance issues (pressure) requires vigilance with regards to water for dialysis services. Pay extra attention to your water tests and cultures. If there are questions or issues specific to water for hemodialysis services, please contact Margaret Spillman, RN, Louisiana DHH, Health Standards Section. Her phone number is 225.342.0158.

Be cognizant that your patients may have questions and/or concerns and your staffs should be ready to answer them accordingly. For those of you that work with peritoneal dialysis (PD) and home hemodialysis (HD) patients, please remind them to stay vigilant about their monitoring, as well. Share the air quality information listed below (e.g., odor) with your staffs and patients. The Network will continue to monitor communications from Louisiana state officials and provide updates as necessary.

Louisiana Response Information: In response to the oil leaking in the Gulf of Mexico and out of an abundance of caution, state agencies are on alert to ensure that we work to protect Louisiana’s coastline and natural resources in the event that oil reaches our shores. The state took immediate steps this week to protect our wildlife and fisheries by requesting the placement of protective barriers, called “booms” around areas of our coastline. Leaders of our affected agencies, who deal with the coast and our natural habitat, are in constant contact with the federal officials, including the United States Coast Guard. Working together, we will respond to any threat to our shores. The federal government has launched an informational website about the response to the oil leak. It is online at www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com

Statement by Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals / Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality Regarding Petroleum Odor in Onshore Communities:

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality are reporting that residents of coastal areas of southeast Louisiana, including New Orleans, may be detecting an odor possibly resulting from the oil spill approaching the Louisiana coast. DHH and DEQ have requested continuous air quality testing and monitoring from the EPA, and DEQ will be assisting the EPA by increasing the frequency of air sampling at its Kenner and Chalmette monitors. These samples will receive expedited turnaround by EPA labs. If it is determined that air quality issues exist, DEQ and DHH will communicate these issues immediately to local authorities or take any other action deemed appropriate to protect public health and safety.

Some people may be sensitive to any change in air quality, which could cause symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, or headaches. If you have these symptoms, you should consider staying indoors, ventilating your home with air conditioning and avoiding strenuous outdoor activity. If these symptoms do not improve, you should then consider contacting your primary care physician or other health care provider for medical advice. If you have pre-existing medical conditions, such as asthma or other respiratory illness, you should consider communicating with your physician if you feel symptomatic.

Additional Resources:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/index.html>
- USGS public water utility information: <http://water.usgs.gov/owq/FAQ.htm>
- Louisiana Emergency Management Agency: <http://emergency.la.gov/>

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