The 21 day rule is an event reporting rule, which reduces reporting of dialysis events that are likely to be related to the same patient problem. NHSN users should find and correct 21 day rule violations in NHSN prior to the quarterly Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) deadlines.

NHSN users are responsible for ensuring their data in NHSN are complete and accurate. Data that are frozen quarterly and submitted to CMS will be reflected in each facility’s CMS end-stage renal disease quality incentive program (CMS ESRD QIP) performance score. Users should report accurate and complete data according to the definitions found in the Dialysis Event Protocol. The protocol stipulates that an event, which violates the 21 day rule for that event type ***should not*** be reported to NHSN (see Part 1 and Part 2 of the 21 day rule newsblast series for more information).

How should you identify 21 day rule violations in NHSN?

The “Line Listing-21 Day Rule Checks” is a report to assist users with reviewing their data for accuracy. This one-page guide is found under the “Analysis Resources to Create Reports” section of the Dialysis Event Surveillance website.

The “Line Listing- 21 day Rule Checks” report identifies pairs of dialysis events in, which one of the events violates the 21 day rule. To assist you, the pair of events will be identified with the First Event Date, First Event ID, Second Event Date, Second Event ID, the # of Days Between Dialysis Events, and the Dialysis Event Type.

To run this report in NHSN, first generate a new dataset and then navigate to the Output Options screen and the Data Quality folder. By clicking the ‘Modify’ button, you will be able to select the date range and the report format you would like to see. When selecting the date range, we recommend that you include a minimum of 5 months of data, including the prior to and the month following each quarter. For detailed steps on how to run the report, see the NHSN Guide to Interpreting the Dialysis Event 21 Day Rule Checks Report on the Dialysis Event Surveillance website.
TIP: Review your data quarterly prior to the CMS NHSN deadlines

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 30</td>
<td>January 1 – March 31</td>
<td>December 11 – April 21</td>
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<td>September 30</td>
<td>April 1 – June 30</td>
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<td>December 31</td>
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<td>March 31</td>
<td>October 1 – December 31</td>
<td>September 10 – January 21</td>
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Remember, the 21 day rule is applied to the event date (with the exception of IV antimicrobial starts, see Part 2 of this newsblast series for more information) and is applied across calendar months. By running this report in June, for example, and including the months of December to April, you will be able to identify any 21 day rule violations that occurred with events entered for January 1 – March 31 before the first quarter CMS NHSN deadline on June 30.

How should you correct 21 day rule violations in NHSN?

1) Review both events in the pair by clicking ‘Event’ and then ‘Find’ on the left blue navigation panel and searching for the events by the First Event ID and Second Event ID.

2) If an incorrect event date was entered on one of the Dialysis Event forms, make the correction by clicking ‘Edit’ at the bottom of the form and then ‘Save’ once the changes have been made.

3) If the information reported on the two event forms is correct and the information is identical, then delete the second event form from NHSN by clicking ‘Delete’ at the bottom of the form.

4) If the information reported on the two event forms is correct but additional information was provided on the second event form that is not present on the first, edit the first event form to include the unique information (e.g., additional pathogens and antimicrobial susceptibility information) and then delete the second event form by clicking ‘Delete’ at the bottom of the form.
   a. If you believe the second event is not part of the same patient incident, or if you want to monitor your facility’s dialysis events in greater detail, you may use NHSN to track events that violate the 21 day rule by entering the event into a Custom Event form. Instructions on how to create and submit a Custom Event form will be included in Part 4 of this series.

5) After you make any changes, confirm that no other 21 day rule violations exist by generating a new dataset and then running the “Line Listing – 21 Day Rule Checks” report again.

Questions about NHSN? Contact us at nhsn@cdc.gov with “Dialysis” in the subject line and we will respond to your inquiry within 5 business days.