

News from the NHSN Help Desk

Part 3: How do you identify and correct 21 day rule violations?

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.

Dialysis Event Types:
 ABX = IV antimicrobial start
 PBC = Positive blood culture
 PRS = Pus, redness, or increased swelling at vascular access site

Facility Org ID	CMS Certification Number	Patient ID	Patient First Name	Patient Last Name	First Event ID	Second Event ID	First Event Date	Second Event Date	# of Days Between Dialysis Events of Same Type	Dialysis Event Type
10877	000001	0001	Jane	Test	44485	44626	01/12/2015	01/19/2015	7	ABX
10877	000001	0002	Jane	Brown	44620	44627	02/04/2015	02/12/2015	8	ABX
10877	000001	0002	Jane	Brown	44620	44627	02/04/2015	02/12/2015	8	PBC
10877	000001	0003	JD	Conner	44621	44628	02/19/2015	02/27/2015	8	PRS
10877	000001	0004	Shirley	Munster	44622	44636	02/10/2015	03/02/2015	20	ABX
10877	000001	0004	Shirley	Munster	44635	44636	03/02/2015	03/04/2015	2	ABX

Annotations for the table:

- Facility Identifiers:** Facility Org ID and CMS Certification Number.
- Patient Identifiers:** Patient ID, Patient First Name, and Patient Last Name.
- The date of the first dialysis event reported to NHSN:** First Event Date.
- The date of the second dialysis event of the same type reported to NHSN:** Second Event Date.
- The number of days between the 1st and 2nd event of the same type:** # of Days Between Dialysis Events of Same Type.
- The dialysis event type for which a 21-day rule violation has occurred:** 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](#).

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TIP: Review your data quarterly prior to the CMS NHSN deadlines

Date of CMS NHSN Dialysis Event Deadline	Event Dates Included in CMS NHSN Deadline	Event Dates to Review in “Line Listing – 21 Day Rule Report”
June 30	January 1 – March 31	December 11 – April 21
September 30	April 1 – June 30	March 11 – July 21
December 31	July 1 – September 30	June 10 – October 21
March 31	October 1 – December 31	September 10 – January 21

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.