



# MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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Martin O'Malley  
Governor

Robert M. Summers, Ph.D.  
Secretary

Anthony G. Brown  
Lieutenant Governor

April 12, 2012

Dear Water Supplier:

Kidney Dialysis Centers must take special precautions to ensure that the water they use is contaminant free since it is paramount to their patients' health. If you provide water to dialysis centers, I am asking that you keep them in mind and notify them if your water quality changes, and if possible, let them know if a service interruption is expected.

Kidney dialysis facilities require much higher water quality than public water systems generally produce. This is because the dialysis patient is exposed to a much higher volume of water than a healthy person and their kidneys can no longer filter on their own. If any contaminate is left in the water, even at very low levels, the patient is at risk.

Extensive additional treatment of tap water is critical for the safety of dialysis patients. The additional water treatment at the clinic typically includes, carbon filters for chlorine and TOC removal, deionization, followed by reverse osmosis. The operation of the on-site treatment becomes more difficult when the tap water quality suddenly changes. For this reason, it is helpful for the dialysis centers to have accurate information in advance from the water supplier of any significant water quality changes. In particular they should be notified if chlorine levels are significantly increased, especially if levels are 4.0 mg/l or above.

We understand that, on an annual basis, kidney dialysis facilities send their water supplier contact information, and request to be notified of water quality or treatment changes and water outages. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene maintain a list of dialysis centers in each county which can be found at:

[http://dhmh.maryland.gov/ohcq/docs/Provider-Listings/PDF/WEB\\_ESRD.pdf](http://dhmh.maryland.gov/ohcq/docs/Provider-Listings/PDF/WEB_ESRD.pdf)

We are aware that some water systems are already following these recommendations and we thank you. We encourage all water systems that serve dialysis centers to develop a notification procedure for outages, significant water quality changes, and in particular, elevated chlorine levels. We greatly appreciate your consideration, support, and help on this important matter. Please contact the Water Supply Program at (410) 537-3706, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Barry K. O'Brien, P.E.

Deputy Administrator  
MDE Water Supply Program