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About Me: Eric Dolby Sr.,
PAC Chair North Carolina,

Depression and Dialysis: My Story

As told by Eric Dolby Sr., Raleigh, NC

My name is Eric Dolby, I live in Raleigh, NC, with my wife. I went to college for nursing, worked as a nurse for 17 years and currently work in a Deli. I have two adult children, a daughter and a son, and a granddaughter who lives with me. I joined the Patient Advisory Council (PAC) as volunteer chair member in 2016 and I am a Subject Matter Expert for the National Coordinating Center. Before receiving a kidney transplant, I was on dialysis for 13 years.

My 50th birthday was the first year I enjoyed my first year dialysis free!

I have been around dialysis for long time. When I was a nurse, I had many family members who lived and who died while on dialysis. When starting dialysis myself, transitioning from caretaker to patient was difficult, to say the least. Not only was I starting dialysis, but I also had many other health complications, including four bouts of cancer and five major infections that stopped my heart. I was interested in transplant as my treatment option, but these complications kept me from getting on the waiting list during most of my time on dialysis.

Often times, my treatments felt like a merry-go-round. They would give me medicine to help with my symptoms, and then more medicine to help with the side effects. It reached a point where I felt as if I was simply, living for my treatment. It was exhausting. I spent so much time thinking about all the things I could not do, that I did not feel like a part of my life anymore. I fell into depression, and the fact that I felt very sick and was having severe complications only made it worse.

I started surrounding myself with people outside the clinic who were healthy and positive thinkers, this helped with my depression. Then I landed a job at Bojangles; this was a turning point for me. I started when I was 47, and some of my managers were half my age! I never had any experience working in fast food, so I was completely out of my element and it took a bit of adjusting, but working made me feel like myself again. My first check was \$28, and I remember I couldn't have been prouder. I had my own spending money to go out and spend as I chose; it gave me purpose!

Once I started to feel like myself again, I started to pursue passions I had before going on dialysis. One passion I have is to help people. I started Advocating with the American Kidney Association, working at homeless shelters, and doing anything I could to give back. I have learned, in my 50 years, the more you give back, the less you have to hold on to. Focusing on my passions lifted my spirits and gave me a better outlook on life. When you focus on taking care of yourself and having the mentality to get better, things will fall into place.

For me, that meant getting a job, being productive, and getting involved with people. My advice to others on dialysis right now is to get involved in your passions, whatever they were, before you started treatment. It is possible to still be an active participant in your life and community, but you must make a conscious decision to live on dialysis!



If you have a concern, but you are uncomfortable talking to a facility staff member, you may call your ESRD Network at:

IPRO End-Stage Renal Disease Network of New England (CT, MA, NH, RI, VT)

1952 Whitney Avenue, 2nd Floor
Hamden, CT 06517

Patient Toll-Free:
1 (866) 286-ESRD (3773)

Fax: (203) 389-9902

E-mail: info@nw1.esrd.net

Web: network1.esrd.ipro.org

IPRO End-Stage Renal Disease Network of New York

1979 Marcus Avenue, Lake Success,
NY 11042

Patient Toll-Free: 1 (800) 238-3773

Fax: (516) 326-8929

E-mail: info@nw2.esrd.net

Web: network2.esrd.ipro.org

IPRO End-Stage Renal Disease Network of the South Atlantic (GA, NC, SC)

606 Aviation Parkway, Suite 30
Morrisville, NC 27560

Patient Toll-Free: 1 (800) 524-7139

Fax: (919) 388-9637

E-mail: info@nw6.esrd.net

Web: network6.esrd.ipro.org

IPRO End-Stage Renal Disease Network of the Ohio River Valley (IN, KY, OH)

3201 Enterprise Parkway, Suite 210
Beachwood, OH 44122

Patient Toll-Free: 1 (844) 819-3010

Fax: (216) 593-0101

E-mail: info@nw9.esrd.net

Web: network9.esrd.ipro.org

The Network will accept grievances by phone, fax, email or postal mail.

Tips for getting involved and additional resources:

- Get involved outside your clinic with things you love.
- Join your local PAC or speak to your Social Worker about a dialysis support group.
- Talk to your kidney care team about how you feel and ask what treatment options are right for you.
- Investigate your work options through the Ticket to Work Program. This is a free and voluntary program that can help Social Security beneficiaries go to work, get a good job that may lead to a career, and become financially independent, all while they keep their Medicare or Medicaid benefits. <https://www.ssa.gov/work/>
- Review the Dialysis Patient Depression Toolkit created by patients for patients – The National Forum of ESRD Networks Kidney Patient Advisory Council (KPAC) <http://esrdnetworks.org/resources/toolkits/patient-toolkits>
- Speak to your healthcare team of professionals about options to treat your depression.

Additional Resources

- **American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP)** www.aakp.org
Toll-free: (800) 749-2257 Email info@aakp.org
- **National Kidney Foundation (NKF)** Website: www.kidney.org
Call 855-653-7337 (855-NKF-PEER) or email nkfpeers@kidney.org
- **Renal Support Network (RSN)** Website: www.RSNhope.org
Phone: (818) 543-0896 E-mail: info@RSNhope.org



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