



Comparative Effectiveness of Two Approaches to Symptom Monitoring in Hemodialysis

JANUARY 2024 • ISSUE 04

Optimization Phase Summary

In November 2023, the SMaRRT-HD Study completed its Optimization Phase. The Optimization Phase took place across 4 months in 3 non-trial Fresenius Medical Care clinics located in Mebane, NC, Medford, MA, and Greenville, NC. Patients receiving care on participating shifts were enrolled in the Optimization Phase using the research processes planned for the Trial Phase. Clinic staff administered the SMaRRT-HD symptom survey two times, and care teams used the SMaRRT-HD system alerts and reports to follow-up on patient symptoms. The Optimization Phase helped the study team improve research processes, fine-tune training materials, and optimize workflows for use of the SMaRRT-HD system during routine dialysis care.

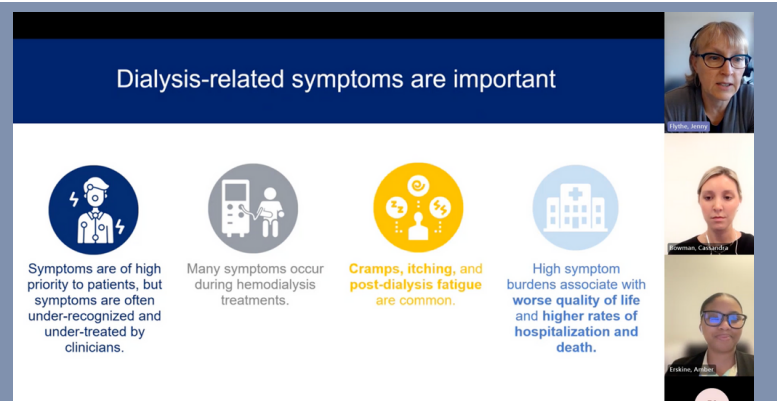
Optimization Phase Clinics			
	Clinic 1	Clinic 2	Clinic 3
# of Participating Shifts	1	1	2
# of Patients Enrolled	16	19	40
# of Surveys Completed	24	34	53
% of Surveys Completed	80%	92%	88%

Optimization Phase Findings and Trial Phase Plans	
Optimization Phase Finding	Trial Phase Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clinic staff may offer additional ineligibility information not provided by medical directors or treating nephrologists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Update permissions so clinic staff can help identify patients ineligible for the study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some patients would like to opt-out without calling the study number 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Update permissions so clinic staff can alert research team to patient opt-out
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Virtual staff training sessions via live webinars are feasible and effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Offer virtual and in-person training sessions, allow clinics to choose preference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not all staff can be present for training sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Provide recordings of virtual trainings and offer live, recorded, and written training materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some of the trainings are not relevant to all clinic staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Tailor training content to specific audiences.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff found the study video engaging and inspiring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Include the study video in Trial Phase trainings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Checking the SMaRRT-HD system every day for missing surveys is burdensome for staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Shorten patient survey completion timeframe to 1 week to reduce staff burden
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tablet computers lock too quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Extend the time to screen locking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It can be hard for clinic staff to remember when to administer symptom surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Provide multiple reminders with phone calls, bathroom and breakroom signs, treatment sheet stickers, and nursing station calendars





Cassie and Amber at FMC-Medford for in-person training



Jenny, Cassie, and Amber conducting live webinar training with FMC-ECU

***Thank you to the staff and patients who participated in the Optimization Phase!
We appreciate the time and energy you spent helping us test and refine the SMaRRT-HD system.***

Stakeholder Panel Meeting

The SMaRRT-HD Stakeholder Panel met virtually in December 2023 to review the findings from the Optimization Phase and discuss how the findings can be used to inform the upcoming Trial Phase.

Stakeholders suggested that the study team:

- Encourage clinics to think of SMaRRT-HD as a new care process by asking clinics how they would like the system to fit their workflow. Debrief with clinic staff and refine workflows after 1-2 survey cycles.
- Increase communication with patient participants through study newsletters and progress updates.
- Boost patient enrollment with Lobby Days and in-person team presence.
- Hold virtual office hours so staff can troubleshoot issues and reflect on study progress.
- Add clinic success stories and accounts of positive SMaRRT-HD experiences to the bimonthly progress report for clinics using the SMaRRT-HD system.

***We are grateful for the opportunity to learn from such diverse and experienced stakeholders.
Thank you to the Stakeholder Panel members for their time and expertise!***

One idea... would be to collect and share stories on how this is helpful for patients. Just generating the sense from staff that people are benefitting and this is helping our patients might be helpful for improving engagement.

I agree 100% that if people understand 'the why', they will be much more likely to engage.

The implementation of the study, not just the results of it, will provide lots of learning lessons for the community.

[When adopting a new care process] it is helpful to ask staff 'what will help you implement this in clinic?'

Stakeholder Spotlight

Precious McCowan, MS is a Dallas native whose unwavering spirit meets the challenges of kidney disease head-on. In 2010, her journey began with a kidney and pancreas transplant, but within seven months, the kidney failed, leading to eight years of in-center hemodialysis.

Despite setbacks, Precious remains a resilient advocate, serving on various boards and committees for over a decade, aiming to improve the lives of kidney disease patients worldwide. Her involvement as a Stakeholder Panel member and Patient Workgroup participant for the SMarRT-HD Study highlights her commitment to advancing kidney care and research.



With a passion for advocacy, Precious played a pivotal role in shaping equitable kidney transplantation wait time policies through her involvement in the UNOS eGFR committee. Her dedication echoes in her efforts to champion fairness for all affected individuals.

Beyond her advocacy work, Precious finds fulfillment in mentoring others battling kidney disease, standing by her motto, “To be of service to all mankind.” Her unwavering dedication and resilience continue to inspire those around her, embodying a spirit of compassion and empowerment.

What excites you most about the SMarRT-HD Study?

What excites me about the SMarRT HD study is that in addition to dialysis symptom monitoring, this project may improve patient-staff engagement and communication for better health outcomes.

What inspires you?

I am inspired by helping others achieve their goals and work through issues that are hindering them from being their best. Although I am battling my health challenges with kidney disease, I thrive knowing that I have helped others overcome their dilemmas.

Welcome to the Team

Emmie Cole, MS, CCRP is a Research Coordinator with the Flythe research program. They have a Master’s in Occupational Therapy, a Bachelor’s in Psychology, and a Minor in Biology. Emmie has been working in clinical research at UNC’s School of Medicine for seven years. In addition to their work in the Psychiatry and Oncology Departments, Emmie has over three years of experience coordinating research projects at the UNC Kidney Center. Currently, Emmie is supporting Dr. Flythe’s research studies in dialysis clinics, with a focus on improving quality of life for patients. Outside of the office, Emmie enjoys reading, gaming, and gardening when they aren’t busy cuddling their young daughter.

“I believe in the potential of technology for electronic symptom reporting to improve communication between patients and their care teams, support their collaboration in managing dialysis symptoms, and improve the quality of patients’ lives. I am so excited to play a role in bringing that technology to dialysis patients and care teams across the United States.”



SMaRRT-HD Awarded PCORI Supplement

We're excited to announce that the SMaRRT-HD Study has been awarded supplemental funding from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI). We will collaborate with Dr. Lilia Cervantes at the University of Colorado School of Medicine to learn how to better foster engagement of Latinx individuals in dialysis research and research more broadly.

Focus Areas for the Latinx Supplement



Upcoming Activities

Trial Phase: Launch Scheduled for May 2024.

Stakeholder Panel Meeting #3: Summer 2024. Stay tuned for scheduling information.

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May 2023 | SMaRRT-HD Trial Phase Start

