

# “First things first, I always check in with my team.”

Rachelle Lusk, Facility Administrator  
Dialysis Clinic | Olympia, WA



With a background in dialysis facility inspection and health regulation compliance, Rachelle came to kidney care with significant experience keeping healthcare centers compliant with the latest rules and policies.

“Dialysis is so heavily regulated that CMS depicts pretty much what you're going to do on a daily basis,” she said. “It's super repetitive — like on Monday, Wednesday, Friday at 11 o'clock, I jump on a call for staffing and admissions for our whole entire region, helping clinics around us stay staffed up, and discuss any admissions that are pending.”

## Making sure patients and staff get what they need

Rachelle's job is to make sure that all the providers in her clinic — and often other clinics, too — are working well together. This, in turn, ensures that patient outcomes are as positive as they can be.

“Communication is key,” she said. “We hold a core team meeting every Thursday, two o'clock. Everybody is required to come prepared and they know what they have to report out on, and it's just a lot of collaboration.”

“My job too is to keep the outside at bay,” she adds.

**“Patients come to me just because they're my friends and want to hear about my family... Everybody knew that we were having my daughter's wedding at our house and they wanted to see all the photos. They love the vegetables that I bring from our garden for them. It's just a very friendly space.”**

## Outside factors can make providing care much more difficult

The Olympia clinic that Rachelle runs was a “flex clinic” during the pandemic, which meant that the kidney community relied heavily on Rachelle and her team to ensure treatment was accessible on an irregular schedule. And the pandemic is still a reality for them.

“Pre-pandemic, we were much more stable as far as staffing and tenure,” she said. “It affected just the overall emotional and psychosocial end of things.”

But COVID is just one problem. There's also a disconnect between policymakers and patients.

“We're not just dealing with dead kidneys here; we're dealing with typically 10 other co-morbidities on top of it,” she said. “[Legislators] need to understand what it is like to be a dialysis patient. I think that if they had a sense of what it's like to be a patient, we would have much more success.”