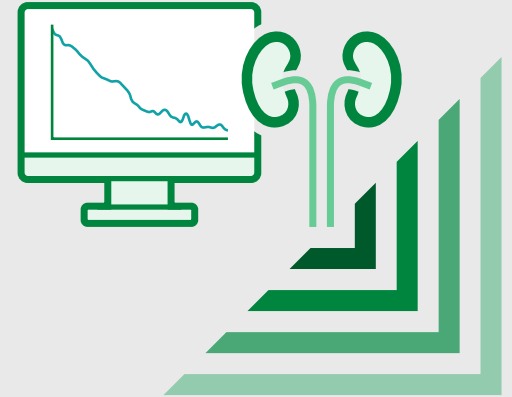


Virtual Solutions for Chronic Kidney Disease Management

HEALTH TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT | SEPTEMBER 2026



Background on PHTI's Report on Virtual Solutions for CKD Management

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a condition in which the kidneys are damaged or do not work as well as they should. Over time, CKD can get worse, making it harder for the kidneys to filter waste from the blood.

CKD affects more than one in seven adults in the United States.¹ Many people with CKD often also have diabetes, hypertension, or other chronic conditions.

Early-stage CKD usually does not cause symptoms, so many people do not know they have it. As a result, CKD may not be diagnosed until the disease is more advanced. When CKD is found earlier, there are more opportunities to slow the disease and protect kidney function.

Once CKD is diagnosed, recommended care includes taking medicines that can help protect the kidneys and managing the other health conditions that can affect kidney function. As CKD gets worse, planning ahead for dialysis or a kidney transplant also becomes important.

Recently, a number of virtual programs designed to help patients manage CKD have become available through Medicare and other health plans. These programs work with nephrologists (doctors who specialize in kidney care) to help you manage your CKD. They may offer services such as help scheduling appointments, in-home or telehealth visits, help with medications, and information about managing CKD and your treatment options. Because these virtual programs often work through your doctor, you may receive their services without knowing that you are part of the program.

What PHTI Found

The Peterson Health Technology Institute (PHTI) is an independent nonprofit organization that conducts evidence-based assessments of digital health tools. PHTI evaluated eight virtual CKD programs to understand how well they work.

For this assessment, PHTI reviewed clinical and economic research and spoke with doctors, health plans, and the companies that offer these programs. PHTI also looked at results from a large Medicare program for kidney care. PHTI interviewed 10 patients with CKD from across the country to understand their experiences.

PHTI found that virtual CKD programs have not been shown to slow kidney disease compared with the care patients normally receive. They also have not been shown to increase the use of recommended medications or slow the loss of kidney function.

These programs did show some benefit for patients whose kidneys are close to failing. They helped more patients start dialysis in a planned way instead of in an emergency.

Overall, PHTI found that virtual CKD programs have not yet been shown to consistently improve patients' health beyond the care they normally receive.

What It Means for You

Managing CKD often means keeping track of medications, monitoring lab results, and coordinating care with many different doctors. While these programs have not been shown to slow CKD, they may make it easier to manage your care.

If your health plan or nephrologist offers you one of these programs, it may still provide helpful support in addition to your regular care.

Depending on the program, it may help you:

- Get answers to questions about your kidney disease, diet, or medications
- Make appointments with nephrologists or other specialists
- Find pharmacies or transportation to appointments
- Prepare for dialysis, if you need it
- Learn about kidney transplants and transplant waiting lists

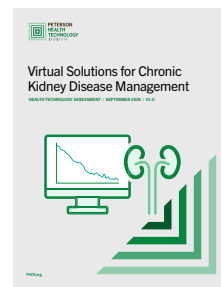
You can share [PHTI's research](#) with your doctor and ask whether they work with a virtual CKD program and whether it could be helpful for you.

Costs

If you are interested in a virtual CKD program, or if your doctor recommends one, you may be able to access these programs through your health insurance, employer, or kidney doctor's office. Some programs may be available at low or no cost to you.

Accessing PHTI's Full Report

You can access the full report [here](#).



¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Chronic Kidney Disease Basics," accessed July 2026. <https://www.cdc.gov/kidney-disease/about/index.html>.