

JOSE PUZON TRANSCRIPT

Segment 1 – Personal Background

>> **JOSE:** Hi, I'm Jose. I'm from the Philippines and I've been here since 2005. I started working on dialysis in 2006. I chose this job because dialysis is close to my family, because one of my relatives especially my grandmother, was on dialysis. When I got here I wasn't able to help her with her situation because she was already on her end stage, so I was really looking at how to help.

I had one of my cousins who worked in a dialysis unit, which inspired me to do it so that when my grandmother passed I was already on dialysis. I see myself doing the help that I'm doing right now, supposedly as if I'm helping my grandmother.

Some patients do three to four hours a week of dialysis, three to four hours a day or more, so working in dialysis is like working on your family members, or working on somebody close to your heart.

Segment 2 – What Does It Take?

>> **JOSE:** For you to work in dialysis they require a GED or at least High School Graduate and then you could take a course or a training in a dialysis school that specializes in dialysis work. Basically in the technical part of the class they teach you how to set up the machine, how the machine works and how to sort out complications and interventions using the machine without a live patient. While doing all the technical stuff, you should be able to set up the machine by yourself, trouble shoot any problem on the machine, so when you go to the real world with real patients, you know how to do it.

The blood of the patient is outside of their body. It is relying on the machine so whenever you have the machine, you should take care of it as if it is part of the patient's body. Whatever is happening in the machine will also affect the patient. On the training we were trained to work on the machine as if there is a real patient on it.

After you have completed the hours of training, you serve 3000 hours, and then they will let you take the state exams or the certificate. With the state exam we are only

covering California, but now they are requiring us to take the national exam. The certification would last three years.

Segment 3 – Who Needs Dialysis?

>> **JOSE:** Dialysis is for people with end stage renal disease (ESRD). It is a disease where the kidney stops working. Usually with dialysis you need a treatment of at least three days a week. Basically your kidney is working 24 hours a day. With a kidney that is on end stage renal disease, it is not working, or it is partially working. Your body cannot handle the task that the kidney is supposed to be working on, like removal of toxins, removal of extra fluid, giving your body balance or homeostasis, and some other functions that require a kidney. Basically it is a replacement of your kidney and helps your own system to cope with daily living.

With patients who develop ESRD, usually they had diabetes, hypertension or some other trauma or accident, anything that would be affecting the kidney, drug overdose or some medication reactions. To mimic the role of the kidney, the machine is set up as a kidney extension, so you have your blood taken out of one side of the body which goes into the machine, gets processed, and cleaned and returned to the body. Excess fluid is the common problem that happens to dialysis patients, so problems with the kidney will cause fluid retention. Fluid retention is when the body is not able to get rid of the fluid. Patients with kidney disease will basically drown in their own fluid intake.

Segment 4 - What Does The Work Involve?

>> **JOSE:** As a technician you are working with the rest of the team. The team includes the physician, the doctors and you are working under the nursing license. So you have a charge nurse working with you, but as a patient care technician, you are the staff person that is closely monitoring the patients. The doctors are giving the orders and the nurses will carry it out and you as the technician would be the one that is closely connected to the patient, because you are doing the patient care. You are there to physically assist them, put out their meals, set their machines and do everything you need to do while doing dialysis. The closer you get to know the patients every day, the more you will be able to help them, because you know when they don't feel good, you know by their facial expressions, their movements and gestures. You know something is going on, so if you are caring for them there would be an attachment to the patient that would be helpful to them.

Segment 5 - What Are The Challenges?

>> **JOSE:** The difficulty in the first few months would be coping with the environment that you are in. Basically it is blood, blood smell and blood and then the difficulty of placing needles. Even experts or technicians that have been doing it for years, still encounter the difficulty of

putting needles. You need full concentration, because you are threading the needle in a vein, a tiny vein. Probably like a few inches of vein, a very thin vein.

This kind of job requires us to work at least 12 hours or more, you need to concentrate every time you work because you are working with sharp objects. To maintain concentration you need to have full rest at night or at least physically and mentally prepare yourself for the job the next day.

Most of us work two jobs at least - two 12 hours a day jobs so we work 6 days or 5 days it depends upon the company where we work. To maintain the concentration you really need to commit yourself so that you don't make any mistakes. Because two things that would happen if you make a mistake is the safety of your patient and your own safety. If you don't concentrate, you might end up hurting the patient or hurting yourself.

Segment 5 - Would You Recommend This Work?

>> **JOSE:** I would definitely recommend this job not just as a job but a career in the medical field, because there is so much advancement that's happening right now in the dialysis community and then there is so much development. Most of us, if we want to advance our skills, some take nursing dialysis as an advanced learning. It is a very rewarding job. We have technicians that have been working in this job for about 35 years now and they still do that same job. It is a very stable job.

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