

Guidelines For Hospice Referrals

Two or more items in any category should generate a hospice referral

General Guidelines

- Life-limiting condition
- Patient/family focus on symptom relief rather than cure
- Progression of disease(s)
- Evidence of weight loss; serum albumin < 2.5g/dl
- Symptoms & signs that paint a picture of decline
- Karnofsky or Palliative Performance Scale score < 50%
- Dependence in at least 2 ADLs
- Need for frequent hospitalization, office or ER visits
- Progressive/unhealing stage III or IV pressure ulcers

Cancer

- Clinical findings of malignancy with widespread, aggressive or progressive disease as evidenced by increasing symptoms, worsening lab values and/or evidence of metastatic disease
- Impaired performance on Palliative Performance Scale of <70%
- Refuses further curative therapy or continues to decline despite definitive therapy. Decline evidenced by:
 - Hypercalcemia > or = 12
 - Cachexia or weight loss of 5% in the preceding 3 months
 - Recurrent disease after surgery/radiation/chemotherapy
 - Refusal to pursue additional curative or prolonging cancer treatment
 - Signs and symptoms of advanced disease (nausea, anemia, malignant ascites or pleural effusion, etc.)

Cardiac Disease

- Symptomatic despite optimal treatment with diuretics and vasodilators
- Recurrent CHF
 - Ejection fraction < 20%
- New York Heart Association Class IV
- Supporting factors
 - Arrhythmias are resistant to treatment
 - History of cardiac arrest or resuscitation
 - History of unexplained syncope
 - Cardiogenic embolic disease (e.g., CVA)

Pulmonary Disease

- Severe chronic lung disease
 - Disabling dyspnea at rest, poorly responsive to bronchodilators
 - FEV1 after bronchodilator < 30%
- Progression of end-stage pulmonary disease
 - Recurrent pulmonary infections
- Hypoxemia at rest, on room air: pO₂ < 55mmHg - or O₂ sat < 88%
- Right heart failure secondary to pulmonary disease
- Unintentional progressive weight loss >10%
- Persistent resting tachycardia

Stroke and Coma

- Karnofsky Performance < 40%
- Inability to maintain nutrition/hydration
 - Weight loss > 10%, serum albumin < 2.5 gm/dl, pulmonary aspiration, severe dysphagia
- Coma with any 3 of the following on day 3 of coma
 - Abnormal brain stem response
 - Absent verbal response
 - Absent withdrawal response to pain
 - Serum creatinine > 1.5 mg/dl

To Make A Referral Please Call

888-287-1255 | Fax: 978-774-4389

Please call with patient name, location and diagnosis as well as your name, organization and phone number.

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Renal Disease – ACUTE RENAL FAILURE

- Patient is not seeking dialysis or transplant
 - Creatinine > 8mg/dl (> 6mg/dl for diabetics)
- GFR < 10ml/min
 - Creatinine clearance <10cc/min (<15cc/min for diabetics)
- Co-morbid conditions

Renal Disease – CHRONIC RENAL FAILURE

- Patient is not seeking dialysis or transplant
- Creatinine clearance <10cc/min (<15cc/min for diabetics)
 - Creatinine > 8mg/dl (> 6mg/dl for diabetics); GFR < 10ml/min
- Symptoms: uremia; oliguria; confusion; nausea; vomiting; pruritus; restlessness; hyperkalemia > 7.0, not responsive to treatment; intractable fluid overload, not responsive to treatment

Liver Disease

- PTT > 5 seconds over control
- Serum Albumin < 2.5gm/dl
- End-stage liver disease
 - Ascites refractory to treatment
 - Spontaneous bacterial peritonitis
 - Hepatorenal syndrome
 - Hepatic encephalopathy, refractory to treatment
- Supportive factors
 - Progressive malnutrition
 - Continued alcoholism
 - Hepatocellular carcinoma

Dementia

- Functional Assessment score = 7
 - Unable to ambulate without assist
 - Unable to dress or bathe without assist
 - Urinary and fecal incontinence, intermittent or constant
 - No consistently meaningful verbal communication
- Complications such as aspiration pneumonia, UTI, septicemia, recurrent fevers
- Decubitus ulcers stage 3 or 4
- Weight loss of >10% over last six months

ALS

- Critically impaired respiratory function
 - Dyspnea at rest
 - Use of accessory muscles
 - Respiratory rate > 20
 - Reduced speech / vocal volume
 - Unexplained headaches, anxiety or nausea
- Severe nutritional insufficiency
 - Progressive weight loss of at least 5% of body weight
 - With or without gastrostomy tube insertion

HIV

- CD4 count < 25 cells/mcl or persistent viral load >100,000 copies/ml
- Decreased performance status
- Supporting factors
 - Chronic persistent diarrhea
 - Persistent serum albumin < 2.5
 - Concomitant substance abuse
 - Age > 50
 - Advanced AIDS dementia complex
 - CHF or advanced liver disease

Main: 888-283-1722
24/7 Referrals: 888-287-1255
Fax: 978-774-4389
CareDimensions.org

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in Eastern Massachusetts.