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

Source: Current CMS and NHPCO guidelines

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

Serving over 95 communities in Eastern Massachusetts.