

### DESCRIPTION



**Per the NCP (2018)**, palliative care can be integrated into any setting, delivered by all clinicians and supported by palliative specialists who are part of an interdisciplinary team. Palliative care includes a comprehensive assessment and is reliant on family engagement, communication, care coordination, and care continuity across settings.

### COVID-19 CONCERNS



- Move toward telemedicine may complicate involvement of specialists and interdisciplinary providers.
- “Family engagement” may look different across family units and settings. For example, technology is playing an increased role in family-provider communication. However, not all families can afford the necessary technology and may require strategic planning with designated proxies and loved ones.
- Care coordination and continuity will require constant planning to ensure access to needed services.

### ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS



- Who are the key interdisciplinary providers currently involved in care of the patient?
- Which specialist services or other interdisciplinary providers will likely be needed and what are the current mechanisms for contacting them during COVID-19?
- Does the patient have a healthcare proxy selected and is there completed documentation on file? If not, can that paperwork be completed upon admission and/or initial assessment?
- What is the best method for contacting proxy/surrogate/family given visitor restrictions?
- Is the patient currently receiving curative or palliative treatments?

### QUESTIONS FOR PATIENT/FAMILY



- What is your understanding of the purpose of this hospitalization and/or your current treatment?
- What are your concerns related to this hospitalization and/or your current treatment?
- Has COVID-19 raised any other worries or fears that you would like to discuss?
- Many of our providers are working via telemedicine at this time. Do you anticipate the need to see any of our teams, such as social work or chaplaincy?

### ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR CLINICAL PRACTICE



- Consider starting an email chain of all key interdisciplinary providers of the patient on a hospital-secured database to ensure rapid communication of concerning clinical status changes and promote timely input of all relevant stakeholders.
- Ensure clinical pathway in place to promote timely communication with consultation teams that may be practicing via telemedicine.

### RELATED RESOURCES



- American Society of Clinical Oncology. (2020). General Information about COVID-19 & Cancer. Available at: <https://www.asco.org/asco-coronavirus-resources/care-individuals-cancer-during-covid-19/general-information-about-covid-19>
- Oncology Nursing Society. (2020). COVID-19 Fact Sheet and Implications for Patients with Cancer. Available at: <https://voice.ons.org/news-and-views/covid-19-fact-sheet-and-implications-for-patients-with-cancer>
- VitalTalk. COVID Ready Communication Playbook. Available at: <https://www.vitaltalk.org/guides/covid-19-communication-skills/>

KEYWORDS: ASSESSMENT; INTERDISCIPLINARY CARE; CONTINUITY; COMMUNICATION; FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

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