

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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