

## 1. Criteria for a palliative care assessment at the time of admission

### A potentially life-limiting or life-threatening condition AND ...

#### Primary Criteria <sup>a</sup>

- The “surprise question”: *You wouldn’t be surprised if the patient died within 12 months or before adulthood* <sup>23-25</sup>
- Frequent admissions (e.g. more than one admission for same condition within several months) <sup>26-30</sup>
- Admission prompted by difficult-to-control physical or psychological symptoms (e.g. moderate-severe symptom intensity for more than 24-48 hours) <sup>6,31</sup>
- Complex care requirements (e.g. functional dependency; complex home support for ventilator/antibiotics/feedings) <sup>6</sup>
- Decline in function, feeding intolerance or unintended decline in weight (e.g. failure to thrive) <sup>6,31</sup>

#### Secondary Criteria <sup>b</sup>

- Admission from long-term care facility or medical foster home <sup>c</sup>
- Elderly patient, cognitively impaired, with acute hip fracture <sup>32-35</sup>
- Metastatic or locally advanced incurable cancer <sup>36</sup>
- Chronic home oxygen use <sup>c</sup>
- Out-of-hospital cardiac arrest <sup>37-38</sup>
- Current or past hospice program enrollee <sup>c</sup>
- Limited social support (e.g. family stress, chronic mental illness) <sup>c</sup>
- No history of completing an advance care planning discussion/documentation <sup>6,31</sup>

---

a. Primary Criteria are global indicators that represent the minimum that hospitals should use to screen patients at risk for unmet palliative care needs.

b. Secondary Criteria are more specific indicators of a high likelihood of unmet palliative care needs and should be incorporated into a systems-based approach to patient identification if possible.

c. Consensus panel opinion

**Source:** Weissman DE and Meier DE. Identifying patients in need of a palliative care assessment in the hospital setting: consensus recommendations. *J Pall Med* 2011;14:1-7.

## 2. Criteria for Palliative Care Assessment During Each Hospital Day

### A potentially life-limiting or life-threatening condition AND ...

#### Primary Criteria <sup>a</sup>

- The “surprise question”: *You wouldn’t be surprised if the patient died within 12 months or did not live to adulthood* <sup>1-3</sup>
- Difficult-to-control physical or psychological symptoms (e.g. more than one admission for same condition within several months) <sup>6,31</sup>
- Intensive Care Unit length of stay  $\geq 7$  days <sup>39-44,c</sup>
- Lack of *Goals of Care* clarity and documentation <sup>6,31</sup>
- Disagreements or uncertainty among the patient, staff and/or family concerning ...
  - major medical treatment decisions <sup>6,31</sup>
  - resuscitation preferences <sup>6,31</sup>
  - use of non-oral feeding or hydration <sup>6,31</sup>

#### Secondary Criteria <sup>b</sup>

- Awaiting, or deemed ineligible for solid-organ transplantation <sup>45-46</sup>
- Patient/Family/Surrogate emotional, spiritual, or relational distress <sup>6,31,44</sup>
- Patient/Family/Surrogate request for palliative care/hospice services <sup>c</sup>
- Patient is considered a potential candidate, or medical team is considering seeking consultation for:
  - feeding tube placement <sup>47-51</sup>
  - tracheostomy <sup>52</sup>
  - initiation of renal replacement therapy <sup>53</sup>
  - ethics consultation <sup>54-57</sup>
  - LVAD<sup>d</sup> or AICD<sup>e</sup> placement <sup>58</sup>
  - LTAC<sup>f</sup> hospital or medical foster home disposition <sup>59</sup>
  - bone marrow transplantation (high risk patients) <sup>60-61</sup>

---

a. Primary Criteria are global indicators that represent the minimum that hospitals should use to screen patients at risk for unmet palliative care needs.

b. Secondary Criteria are more specific indicators of a high likelihood of unmet palliative care needs and should be incorporated into a systems-based approach to patient identification if possible.

c. Consensus panel opinion

d. LVAD = Left ventricular assist device

e. AICD = Automated implantable cardioverter-defibrillator

f. LTAC = Long term acute care hospital

**Source:** Weissman DE and Meier DE. Identifying patients in need of a palliative care assessment in the hospital setting: consensus recommendations. *J Pall Med* 2011;14:1-7.