

## Humility of Mary Health Partners Administrative Policy and Procedure

**Dying Patient, Care of**

**RI-28**

Page 1 of 2

Effective Date: 12/00

Revised Date: 9/01; 2/03

Review Date:

**Policy Statement:**

Humility of Mary Health Partners believes that the care of patients at the end of life should be individualized to meet the patient's and family's psychosocial, cultural, and spiritual needs. The patient and family are involved in end of life decisions and patient care activities. Consideration is given to the emotional, psychological, social, spiritual, and cultural concerns, symptom management, relief of pain, physical, and comfort needs. Concern for the patient/family's comfort and dignity guide all aspects of care during the final stages of life.

**Procedure:**

**A. Assessment:**

1. Collaborate with patient, family, physician and other health care providers (as appropriate) regarding the need to discuss end of life decisions. Discussion should include assessment of the following:
  - a. patient status and prognosis
  - b. current treatment options
  - c. advanced directives
  - d. psychosocial, spiritual, religious, and/or cultural beliefs and needs specific to the patient and family
  - e. level of resuscitation desired
  - f. beliefs/desires regarding organ and tissue donation
2. Assess the patient's level of comfort frequently. The assessment should include, but is not limited to:
  - a. pain management
  - b. level of consciousness
  - c. hydration and nutrition

**B. Interventions:**

1. Allow patient's family/significant other to visit patient as desired.
2. Maintain a private, quiet environment for patient and family (move to private room if available). Notify Admitting of medical necessity of private room.
3. Provide patient comfort through nursing measures such as positioning, bathing, or the use of supportive devices and pain management.
4. Provide support and comfort to family/significant other.
5. Involve the patient/family when appropriate in every aspect of care.
6. Respect is given to patients' values, religion, and philosophy.
7. Consider palliative care referral if patient/family agreeable.

8. Collaborate with physician to provide the patient with:
  - a. pharmacologic intervention to promote aggressive and effective pain management and sedation
  - b. adequate hydration and nutrition
  - c. appropriate treatment for any primary and secondary symptoms
9. Whenever possible, involve the patient/family in every aspect of care. Collaborate with patient, family, physician, and other health care providers (as appropriate) regarding the need to withdraw or withhold life support or other treatments/procedures (Refer to Administrative Policy, *Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Comfort Care/Comfort Care Arrest*).
  - a. Collaborate with Pastoral Care and/or Social Services/Case Management, and Palliative Care Team to provide support to patient and family during end of life decision-making process and end of life.
  - b. Consult Medical Ethics Committee as needed to answer questions and resolve conflicts related to end of life decisions.
  - c. Collaborate with organ and tissue donation agency professionals if donation is appropriate and desired.
10. Attempt to assign the same caregivers to provide patient/family support.

**C. Notification of Physician - notify the physician of the following:**

1. Patient and family preferences and needs at the end of life
2. Inability to maintain adequate level of comfort
3. Need for more aggressive pain management
4. Withdrawal of life support
5. Patient death

**D. Documentation:**

1. Document assessment findings and nursing interventions on the nursing flow sheet.
2. Document administration of medications on the Medication Administration Record.
3. Document results of patient, family, physician, and nursing conferences on the Interdisciplinary Progress notes.
4. Document the need/desire for patient/family communication with the physician in the Interdisciplinary Progress notes.

**RECOMMENDER:**

**APPROVED BY:**

**Reference:**

CAMH RI.1.2.7

CAMH PE.1.1