

When to Refer to UnityPoint Health – Palliative Care

Considerations for a Palliative Care Referral

Matching treatment to patient goals

Primary Criteria- indicators that represent the minimum that clinicians should use to screen patients at risk for unmet palliative care needs

- Need for goals of care and/or advanced care planning discussion
- Frequent hospital admissions/ED visits/express care visits
- Admission prompted by difficult-to-control physical or psychological symptoms
- Complex care requirements/multiple chronic conditions
- Decline in function, feeding intolerance or unintended decline in weight
- Patient, family or physician uncertainty regarding prognosis and/or treatment options
- Would you be surprised if the patient died within the next 12 months? STOP: Consider Hospice referral

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

- No history of completing an advance care planning discussion
- Admission to a hospital from a long-term care facility
- Elderly patient, cognitively impaired, with multiple falls
- Metastatic or locally advanced incurable cancer
- Chronic home oxygen use
- Out-of-hospital cardiac arrest
- Limited support (e.g. family stress, chronic mental illness)
- Two or more critical care admissions during the same hospitalization
- Current or past hospice program enrollee
- Prolonged or failed attempt to wean from the ventilator

Goals of Palliative Care

- Improve the quality of life for the patient and their family
- Help individuals understand their illness and treatment options
- Reduce the distressing symptoms of serious illness

Enter an Ambulatory Referral to Care at Home and select “Palliative Care”

You can reach Palliative Care at (515) 241-3510.