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Medical Guidelines for determining Appropriateness for Hospice

Stroke and Coma Diagnosis

Patient Name: _____ ID # _____ Date: _____

After stroke, patients who do not die during the acute hospitalization tend to stabilize with supportive care only. Continuous decline in clinical or functional status over time means that the patient's prognosis is poor.

1. **Acute phase patients:** Immediately following a hemorrhagic or ischemic stroke, any of the following are strong indicators of early mortality.

- Coma or persistent vegetative state secondary to stroke, beyond three days' duration.
- In post-anoxic stroke, coma or severe obtundation, accompanied by severe myoclonus, persistent beyond three (3) days past anoxic event.
- Comatose patients with any 4 of the following on day 3 of coma had 97% mortality by two months:
 - abnormal brain stem response
 - absent verbal response
 - absent withdrawal response to pain
 - serum creatinine >1.5 mg/dl
 - age >70
- Dysphagia severe enough to prevent the patient from receiving food and fluids necessary to sustain life, in a patient who declines or is not a candidate for artificial nutrition and hydration.
- If available, TC or MRI scans may indicate decreased likelihood of survival.

2. **Chronic phase patients.** The following clinical factors may correlate with poor survival and should be documented.

- Age >70
- Poor functional status as evidenced by Karnofsky score or Palliative Performance <40%
- Post stroke dementia as evidence by a FAST score greater than (7A)
 - 7A Ability to speak is limited to approximately 6 intelligible words or fewer, in the course of an average day or in the course of an intensive interview.
 - 7B Speech ability is limited to the use of a single intelligible word in an average day or in the course of an intensive interview (the person may repeat the word over and over).
 - 7C Ambulatory ability is lost (cannot walk without personal assistance).
 - 7D Cannot sit up without assistance (e.g., patient will fall over if there are not lateral rests [arms] on the chair).
 - 7E Loss of ability to smile.
 - 7F Loss of ability to hold up head independently.
- Poor nutritional status, whether on artificial nutrition or not:
 - unintentional progressive weight loss of greater than 10% over prior six months
 - serum albumin less than 2.5 gm/dl (may be helpful prognostic indicator but should not be used by itself).
- Medical complications related to debility and progress clinical decline.
 - aspiration pneumonia
 - Pyelonephritis
 - sepsis
 - Refractory stage 3-4 decubitus ulcers
 - Fever recurrent after antibiotics

RN Signature: _____ Date: _____