Palliative Care Referral Criteria

General Referral Criteria

Presence of a serious illness and one or more of the following:

→ New diagnosis of life-limiting illness for symptom control, patient/family support
→ Declining ability to complete activities of daily living
→ Weight loss
→ Progressive metastatic cancer
→ Admission from long-term care facility (nursing home or assisted living)
→ Two or more hospitalizations for illness within three months
→ Difficult-to-control physical or emotional symptoms
→ Patient, family or physician uncertainty regarding prognosis
→ Patient, family or physician uncertainty regarding appropriateness of treatment options
→ Patient or family requests for futile care
→ DNR order conflicts
→ Conflicts or uncertainty regarding the use of non-oral feeding/hydration in cognitively impaired, seriously ill, or dying patients
→ Limited social support in setting of a serious illness (e.g., homeless, no family or friends, chronic mental illness, overwhelmed family caregivers)
→ Patient, family or physician request for information regarding hospice appropriateness
→ Patient or family psychological or spiritual/existential distress

Cancer Criteria

Presence of any of the above, and/or:

→ Metastatic or locally advanced cancer progressing despite systemic treatments
→ Karnofsky < 50 or ECOG > 3
→ Brain metastases, spinal cord compression, or neoplastic meningitis
→ Malignant hypercalcemia
→ Progressive pleural/peritoneal or pericardial effusions

Neurological Criteria

Presence of any of the above, and/or:

→ Folstein Mini Mental score < 20
→ Feeding tube is being considered for any neurological condition
→ Status Epilepticus > 24 hrs
→ ALS or other neuromuscular disease considering mechanical ventilation
→ Any recurrent brain neoplasm
→ Parkinson’s disease with poor functional status or dementia
→ Advanced dementia with dependence in all activities of daily living