COVID-19 Recommendation Aid

A RESOURCE FOR MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

This aid provides a framework to create holistic recommendations after a conversation with a patient who has underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe complications of COVID-19, should they contract it. For many patients, these conversations may not result in firm decisions about ventilation or resuscitation. Rather, the goal is to open a dialogue and connect your patient’s needs, values, and priorities to therapeutic options.

“Thank you for sharing that with me. I’d like to reflect together on what you’ve shared and make a plan moving forward. Would that be ok?”

“I’ve heard you say that ________________ is really important to you. Based on your priorities and what we know about your illness and this current situation with the coronavirus, I recommend...”

Wellbeing (consider the following options)

Share facts about COVID-19 and counsel the patient on protective measures to prevent infection.

Assure the patient that you will document and honor what matters most to them.

- Revisit the conversation when needed.
- Involve members of the patient’s support system (family, friends) in the next conversation, if the patient desires.

If the patient has urgent distress (e.g. anxiety, depression, isolation) consider:

- Referrals to social work, spiritual care, palliative care, and/or psychiatry.
- Involving other members of the patient’s care team in the next conversation.
- Name and explore the emotion (e.g. “I can see that you’re _____ [insert emotion: upset/ surprised/ anxious]. Tell me more about what you are feeling.”
- Having additional discussions to clarify next steps.

Ask the patient to identify someone they trust to make decisions and encourage them to have a conversation with them (substitute decision maker).

- The goal is for the patient to identify a loved one they trust to make medical decisions if and when they are unable to speak for themselves and to talk to their loved one about their priorities, values, and preferences before that happens.
- Share resources to support patients and families in talking about priorities and preferences, such as the Family Communication Guide or web resources e.g. Speak Up Campaign
  https://www.advancecareplanning.ca/
**Illness and care management** (consider the following options)

**Consider the impact of social distancing on illnesses and well-being.**
- While necessary for public health and personal protection, social distancing can lead to isolation and depression for some patients.
- Enact strategies to support those who are isolated (e.g. frequent contact via telehealth with patients and caregivers).
- Involve social work, recreation team member (for those in long term care), and community resources (e.g. grocery delivery, medication delivery, etc.).

**Consider increasing access to home care services (e.g. home-based palliative care).**
- Consider home hospice palliative care for those who qualify and have expressed preferences for comfort-focused care.
- Ensure access to comprehensive symptom management and psychosocial and spiritual support.

**Ask if patient/ family would like with additional resources specific to their chronic health condition (e.g. CHF, COPD, Dementia)**
- Utilize Patient Health Education Materials Website for resources related to chronic diseases [https://vch.eduhealth.ca/](https://vch.eduhealth.ca/)
- Connect with your Educator for appropriate resources

**After a conversation, complete documentation in accordance with your program/ unit practices (e.g. Advance Care Plan/ Goals of Care/ Provincial No CPR/ MOST)**

**Support System** (consider the following options)

**Consider who else should be involved to help your patient navigate their worries and to provide support during this difficult and uncertain time.**
- Identify the patient’s support system and what helps them cope.
- If the patient lacks a support system, refer to social work, spiritual care, volunteer, patient advocate, etc.
- Involve members of the patient’s support system (family, friends) in the next conversation, if the patient desires.
- Involve most responsible provider (physician, nurse practitioner) and follow up with outstanding recommendations using the What Matters Most to Me Worksheet (COVID-19)

**Help**
- “Thank you for taking the time to talk to me about this.”
- “Does this sound ok? Is there anything else we should think about?”
- “We will do everything we can to help you through this.”