

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES: Palliative Care for Adult patients with Burns and/or Inhalation Injury

OBJECTIVE:

Palliative Care services are a multidisciplinary approach to specialized medical and nursing care. Palliative Care services work in collaboration with the primary team any time there is a life changing illness. Services can assist patients and families with determining goals of care, provide emotional support for patients and families, symptom management and more. Palliative Care services are not simply for comfort care measures, but rather a resource that assists with providing support, pain management, guidance, and much more to patients and family. Palliative care services discuss the journey patients can endure after an injury including the ups and downs. With these discussions at the beginning, being upfront and honest despite survivability, provides patients and/or families with the ability to make informed decisions regarding the goals of care.

End of life decision making and discussions can be difficult. Over the years the advancements in technology and the care for burns has increased the survival rate of patients with large TBSA's. The difficulties now facing the interdisciplinary teams and family members is determining the goals of care. Determining the goals of care can be difficult due to the complexities of burns. Often the discussion of cosmesis arises, as it often affects the outcomes of functionality and survival. Additionally, the discussion of what the patient/family desires for quality of life including the choice for comfort measures.

The process of recovering from a burn injury continues throughout a burn patients' life. Recovery can be extremely challenging and emotional for patients who have experienced a burn. Along with a burn is the physical and emotional trauma that can be experienced. Care often consists of painful treatments and some individuals endure the process of a personal transformation, depending on the extent of their injuries.

Procedure:

For patients who fall under the following categories an order needs to be placed for a Palliative Care consult. Place order even if during off service hours, and the team will follow up when on service.

1. Patients with extensive burns and/or inhalation injury, particularly in the setting of other significant medical comorbidities, are at increased risk for death.
2. Determine patients Baux score (age + TBSA)
3. RBaux (age+TBSA +17) for the presence of inhalation injury.
4. A Baux score >140 to 150 survivability is low.

When to Consult Palliative Care:

1. Baux score >100
2. Patients over 65 with TBSA >20
3. Significant inhalation Injury

Palliative Care Availability: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

(1) Downtown Campus:

(a) Enter order in the EPIC system

1. Adults: Beeper (315)441-7437 or Phone (315)464-6098
2. Pediatrics: 464-5294 or for urgent matters, phone (315) 247-0341.
3. Contact the Palliative Care Service to discuss the consult

(2) Additional questions refer to policy Palliative Care and Palliative Care Consultation:

<https://upstate.ellucid.com/documents/view/3829>