

Decision Guide Case Study No. 4

No Advance Directives

Brief Case History

- Maria Rodriguez is a 67-year-old woman with cancer of the pancreas who has been at home receiving palliative care for the past 3 months.
 - Her family moved to another state and you are not aware of any friends having come to visit her.
 - Mrs. Rodriguez has no advance directives, but clearly has advanced cancer and death is most likely to occur within next 6 months.
- Her medical team (physician and nurse practitioner) have stated they don't want to provide aggressive care for her, but rather make sure she does not suffer and has good quality of life and dignity with death.

Change in Condition:

Four days after admission to your facility:

- Mrs. Rodriguez began doing "poorly," walking less, eating less, and seeming more "distant" when staff talk with her.
- Her physician discussed the findings of the RN's physical assessment and then ordered laboratory tests and a chest x-ray, but none of the results indicated an acute change in condition.
- On her fifth day in your facility, Mrs. Rodriguez became very short of breath. Her family was notified and they insisted on admitting her to the hospital.

Case Study Analysis for Discussion:

- 1) What would you say to the family when they insist on sending Mrs. Rodriguez to the hospital?
- 2) Using the Guide, what are key points you would discuss with Mrs. Rodriguez and her family about going to the hospital? And with the medical team?
- 3) What other actions can you take to keep the resident comfortable and her family reassured she is getting the care she needs?
- 4) Under what circumstances would you support a hospital admission?
- 5) What do you think about recommending hospice care with the physician? If the physician agrees what would you discuss with Mrs. Rodriguez and her family?
- 6) Is it appropriate to discuss readmission issues with the resident at this time?
- 7) Given this patient has no advance directives, and using information learned in the Decision Guide, what other actions could be taken to avoid hospital admission?