

Appropriate Clinical Factors to Consider During Recertification of Medicare Hospice Patients

The following is a guide hospice providers and their staff can use during recertification of a hospice patient. This tool is intended only as a guide, and is not inclusive, nor ensures payment. The use of this tool is not required and is completely voluntary. Any new/persistent/change in clinical factors exhibited by the patient should be documented in the medical record to support the appropriateness of the hospice services provided. Documentation should be in a quantitative form (pounds, 4 on a scale of 1-5, inches, etc.) (See Suggestions for Improved Documentation tool.)

Clinical Status

- Appetite/food consumption (persistent/change)
- Body mass measurement (persistent/change)
- Functional status (change in activity level)
- Infections (new/persistent/change)
- Psychological state (change)
- Recurrent aspiration
- Social status (change in social support, relationships)
- Weight change resulting from disease

Symptoms

- Cough (persistent/change)
- Diarrhea / constipation (persistent/change)
- Dyspnea
- Fatigue (persistent/change)
- Nausea / vomiting (persistent/change)
- Pain (persistent/change)
- Seizure/CNS activity (as related to disease process) (new/persistent/change)
- Swallowing, dysphagia (new/persistent/change)

Signs

- Agitation (new/persistent/increase)
- Ascites (new/persistent/change)
- Circulatory obstructions resulting from disease (new/persistent/change)
- Decreased systolic BP <90
- Decubitus (new/persistent/change)
- Edema (new/persistent/change)
- Heart rate (persistent/change)
- Level of consciousness (persistent/change)
- Pathologic fracture
- Pleural/pericardial effusion (persistent/change)
- Progressive postural hypotension (new/persistent/change)
- Respiratory rate, pattern persistent/change)
- Skin color (persistent/change)
- Urine output (persistent/change)
- Weakness (persistent/change)

Labs (when available)

- Arterial blood gases/pulse oximetry (persistent/change)
- CBC (persistent/change)
- Electrolyte balance (persistent/change)
- Metabolic studies (persistent/change)
- Prealbumin, albumin or cholesterol resulting from disease (persistent/change)
- Tumor markers (persistent/change)

Other Indicators

- Change in KPS/PPS resulting from disease
- Decline in FAST (dementia patients only)
- Medication adjustment
- Identification/development of new/persistent/change in comorbidities
- Usage of continuous, respite, general inpatient hospice care
- Independence (persistent/change)
- Skin integrity (persistent/change)

