

Fraser Health Renal Program

March 2009

Do Not Resuscitate Physicians Orders

Background

Ascertaining patient wishes about cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is one component of the Advance Care Planning (ACP) process. For patients who have made the decision not to have CPR, appropriate documentation and physician orders are required if these wishes are to be respected. The required documentation depends on where the patient currently resides (community/residential care/acute care setting). Unfortunately, there is no single form that transcends throughout the continuum of care.

Fraser Health Acute Care

FHA implemented a CPR and DNR policy in 2005 that is applicable to acute care **admitted patients**. The most responsible physician confirms and documents decisions about goals of care and DNR on the FH DNR form. This form is kept as part of the patient's permanent medical record in the 'greensleeve'. This form needs to be reassessed with every readmission to an acute care facility.

From clinical experience, many outpatients on dialysis have medical orders on their renal charts that originated in acute care settings during an acute illness or exacerbation of a chronic condition. The patient may have been too ill to participate in or recollect the discussion behind these decisions, or their wishes may change once they recover to return home. It is therefore important that wishes are reviewed regularly, with changes in health status, and when the setting of care changes.

Provincial BC MOH No CPR Form

The BC Ministry of Health No CPR form is recognized outside of acute care settings for those living in the community. Often community residing patients on dialysis only have the FH DNR form completed and are at risk of not having their wishes respected outside of the dialysis setting, particularly by BC Ambulance Services. Unfortunately, the language on this form may indicate to patients that their decision to forgo CPR indicates they do not want other medical therapies and are expected to die imminently. It is anticipated this form will be reviewed with the upcoming enactment of new health care legislation (Bill 29).

This document states "this decision shall be in effect unless rescinded and should be reviewed in one year". However, BC Ambulance Services occasionally refuses to honour forms that are over 1 year old. In addition, it is best practice to review DNR wishes regularly.

Recommendations

- 1) The BC MoH No CPR form should be used for all outpatients receiving dialysis. The patient should keep the original in the community 'greensleeve' at home and the yellow copy should be on a 'greensleeve' on the patients' renal chart. Patients should be reminded to carry a copy on their person and wear a no CPR bracelet . A copy can also be provided to the hospital medical records department. If the BC MoH No CPR form is completed, there is no requirement for the FH DNR form to be completed for outpatients. *Physicians may also decide to complete the FH DNR form to document additional directives on the Renal Chart.*
- 2) The BC MoH No CPR form should be reviewed and redone annually with the patient or substitute decision maker. The physician signature/order should also be redone on an annual basis.
- 3) When dialysis patients are admitted to acute care facilities, they should be educated to bring their copy of the BC MoH No CPR form and any other ACP documentation with them to the hospital. It is the responsibility of the attending physician to review the patient's wishes and any medical recommendations for resuscitation and document decisions on the FH DNR form for the acute care 'greensleeve'. In addition, renal unit staff can fax the No CPR form to the admitting hospital unit.
- 5) Documentation of discussion of any ACP conversations is done on the ACP Record form in the greensleeve.
- 6) Patients who wish to fully engage in the ACP process should be supported to speak with their healthcare professionals, family, and document their wishes in the "My Voice" workbook.

Download applications for No CPR Medical Alert Bracelet at:
<http://www.medicalert.ca/nocpr>