

Stroke & Coma

(Local Coverage Determinations for Hospice)

The following criteria are designed to help determine if hospice care may be appropriate for a person with a stroke or other CVA (cerebrovascular accident). Clinical judgement must also be considered.

The following clinical factors may correlate with poor survival and should be documented. Complete 1 – OR – 2 – OR – 3.

1

Post-stroke dementia as evidenced by a FAST score of > 7 on all of the following:

- Ability to speak is limited to approx. 6 intelligible words or fewer in the course of an average day or in the course of an intensive interview
- Speech ability is limited to the use of a single intelligible word in an average day or in the course of an intensive interview (the person may repeat the word over and over)
- Unable to ambulate without assistance
- Unable to dress self
- Urinary and fecal incontinence (intermittent or constant)

2

Poor functional status as evidenced by Karnofsky score of < 40%

- 40% - **Disabled** (*requires special care and assistance; unable to care for self; requires equivalent of institutional or hospital care; disease may be progressing rapidly*)
- 30% - **Severely disabled** (*hospital admission is indicated although death is not imminent*)
- 20% - **Very sick** (*hospital admission necessary; active supportive treatment necessary*)

3

Poor nutritional status whether artificial nutrition or not

- Unintentional weight loss or greater than 10% over prior 6 months **OR**
- Serum albumin less than 2.5 gm/dl (may be helpful prognostic indicator but should not be used by itself)

Choose
Appropriate
Response

Medical complications related to debility and progressive clinical decline:

- Aspiration pneumonia **OR** Recurrent fever after antibiotics **OR** Sepsis **OR** Upper urinary tract infection (pyelonephritis)

Coma, any etiology (choose any 4 of the following):

- Abnormal brain stem response – Absent verbal response – Absent withdrawal response to pain – Serum Creatinine > 1.5 mg/dl – Age greater than 70 years