



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 it is clear she is actively dying. Her physician wants her kept as comfortable as possible.

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 ordered blood tests, physical assessment, and chest x-rays, but none of the results indicated an acute change.
- On her fifth day in your facility, Mrs. Rodriguez became very short of breath. Her family was notified and they insisted on admitting the patient 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) How would you use information from the Guide to discuss this issue with the resident and her family?
- 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 transfer?
- 5) Should the facility recommend hospice care in discussion with the resident and the family? Why or why not?
- 6) Knowing this patient is actively dying and using the Decision Guide as a tool, what additional actions can you take?
- 7) Is it appropriate to discuss readmission issues with the resident at this time?
- 8) Should you discuss a possible readmission with the doctor and if so, what should you say?
- 9) Given this patient has no advance directives, and using information learned in the Decision Guide, are there any other actions that could be taken to avoid transferring this resident to acute care?