

Family Meetings Regarding Do-Not-Resuscitate Status

(1/13/06)

Pre-Meeting Preparation

- Review medical history and issues
- Discuss goals of meeting with team
- Decide which family members should be present

Family Meeting

Making Introductions and Setting Agenda

- Make introductions, including each participant's relationship to patient
- Establish goals of meeting (e.g., "To make sure everyone understands how (patient) is doing and to try to sort out his/her preferences for care")

Eliciting Patient/Family Understanding

- Elicit patient and/or family member's understanding of patient's condition (e.g., "What have you been told about (patient's) condition...Is there anything that isn't clear?")
- Review the current understanding of patient's condition
- Elicit patient and/or family values and goals (e.g., "Given the situation now, what are your hopes for (patient)...What are your fears or concerns?")
- Understand cultural/ethnic values or beliefs that may affect communication or decision making (e.g., "What do I need to know about (patient's) beliefs and practices to provide him/her the best care possible?")

Supporting Decision Making

- Review the specific decision that needs to be made
- Find out if patient made his/her wishes known
- Elicit each family members views as to what the patient would want
- Seek consensus whenever possible
- Review the decisions that were made and check for family understanding

Closing

- Summarize the decision(s) that were made during the meeting
- Elicit any final questions
- Offer statement of appreciation and/or respect

Post-Meeting Follow-up

- Document meeting in patient's chart
- Inform members of medical teams of decisions made during meeting

Do's and Don'ts...Tips for Family Meetings

- Do elicit each individual's understanding of the patient's condition
- Don't assume that everyone has the same information or that they have communicated with one another about what they have been told

- Do encourage all family members to participate and share their views
- Don't allow one family member to do all the talking unless this clearly fits the family's culture and values

- Do focus on patient's perspective and perceived wishes
- Don't allow family members to confuse their wishes with those of the patient

- Do encourage angry family members to talk to you directly
- Don't allow angry family members to interrupt others or persist in arguing with one another

- Do summarize the decisions that are made during the meeting and check for agreement
- Don't assume that everyone is in agreement until you check