

Generations Hospice

Service Corporation

Medicare LCD for Hospice: Dementia

INDICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF COVERAGE AND/OR MEDICAL NECESSITY:

Medicare coverage of hospice care depends upon a physician's certification of an individual's prognosis of a life expectancy of six months or less if the terminal illness runs its normal course. Recognizing that determination of life expectancy during the course of a terminal illness is difficult, this intermediary has established medical criteria for determining prognosis for non-cancer diagnoses. These criteria form a reasonable approach to the determination of life expectancy based on available research, and may be revised, as more research is available. Coverage of hospice care for patients not meeting the criteria in this policy may be denied. However, some patients may not meet the criteria, yet still be appropriate for hospice care, because of other comorbidities or rapid decline. Coverage for these patients may be approved on an individual consideration basis.

Patients will be considered to be in the terminal stage of dementia (life expectancy of six months or less) if they meet the following criteria:

Patients with dementia must show **all** the following characteristics:

1. Stage seven or beyond according to the Functional Assessment Staging Scale
2. Unable to ambulate without assistance
3. Unable to dress without assistance
4. Unable to bathe without assistance
5. Urinary **and** fecal incontinence, intermittent or constant
6. No meaningful verbal communication; stereotypical phrases only or ability to speak is limited to six or fewer intelligible words **and**

Patients must have had one of the following within the past 12 months:

1. Aspiration pneumonia
2. Pyelonephritis or other upper urinary tract infection
3. Septicemia
4. Decubitus ulcers, multiple, stage 3-4
5. Fever, recurrent after antibiotics
6. Inability to maintain sufficient fluid and calorie intake with 10% weight loss during the previous six months or serum albumin <2.5 gm/dl



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