### PURPOSE

To specify the role of the nurse in hospice care.

### Policy

Nursing services will be provided in accordance with accepted standards of practice by or under the supervision of a registered nurse. The hospice nurse will be a member of the interdisciplinary group. The hospice nurse will play a key role in easing physical and psychosocial symptoms and initiating communication with the interdisciplinary group to establish the plan of care.

### A hospice registered nurse will be assigned as the Case Manager for each patient and family/caregiver, and his/her duties will be enumerated in a job description. Duties will include the responsibility for coordination of care and fostering communication between the patient and the interdisciplinary group. The Case Manager will assure that nursing services are provided in accordance with the plan of care. The Case Manager will determine the scope and frequency of services needed based on acuity and patient and family/caregiver needs

### PRocEDURE

1. The hospice nurse performs the initial assessment and participates in the comprehensive assessment and ongoing updates of the comprehensive assessments to assess the impact of the terminal diagnosis on the patient’s physical, functional, psychosocial and environmental needs and activities of daily living.
2. The hospice nurse will participate in developing and implementing the plan of care and will report the condition of patient and family/caregiver to the attending physician, Medical Director and interdisciplinary group on a regular basis, as well as changes in condition and in the plan of care.
3. The hospice nurse will:
   * 1. Manage discomfort and provide symptom relief.
     2. Incorporate specialized nursing skills related to palliative and end-of-life care into all clinical care provided.
     3. Provide patient and family/caregiver education regarding the disease process, self-care techniques, end-of-life care, and processes for addressing ethical issues.
     4. Provide family members with education on the physical and psychological aspects of the dying process.
     5. Provide emotional support to the patient and family.
     6. Assess for risks of pathological grief, cultural and spiritual implications and verbal and nonverbal communication patterns exacerbated by the terminal diagnosis.
     7. Initiate appropriate preventive and rehabilitative nursing procedures.
     8. Prepare clinical and progress notes that demonstrate progress toward established goals.
     9. Coordinate all patient and family/caregiver services and prioritization of needs with the interdisciplinary group, outside services/physicians, etc.
     10. Use a case management approach and make referrals to other services as needed.
     11. Provide specialized hospice training to other staff, family/caregivers to insure adequate care.
     12. Provide an ongoing evaluation of the patient and family/caregiver response to care.
     13. Assess the ability of the caregiver to meet the patient’s immediate needs upon admission and throughout care.
     14. Evaluate own needs for support and use identified systems to meet the need (ie: spiritual care, etc.)
     15. Apply specific criteria for admission and recertification to hospice care to establish appropriate levels of care and the patient’s eligibility.
     16. Facilitate the implementation of another level of hospice care when necessary.
     17. Ensures that information is shared among disciplines (direct or contractual) in all hospice care/service settings.
     18. Ensures that information is shared with non-hospice healthcare providers furnishing unrelated services.
     19. Participate in quality assessment performance improvement teams and activities.
4. The hospice registered nurse will supervise licensed practical nurses, hospice aides, and volunteers in the home, and may follow the family/caregiver into the bereavement period per bereavement plan.,
5. A hospice nurse will be available on a 24-hour basis to meet the physical, psychosocial, spiritual, and practical needs of patients and families/caregivers admitted to the hospice program.
6. Direct provision of nursing care and services will be provided based on accepted standards of practice by or under the supervision of a registered nurse.
7. Patient and family/caregiver education and training activities will be initiated and continued throughout the course of care.
8. Licensed practical nurses will supplement the nursing care needs of the patient as provided by the registered nurse; this may include:
   1. Providing services in accordance with organizational policies and procedures
   2. Preparing clinical and progress notes documenting outcomes of interventions
   3. Assisting the registered nurse or physician in performing specialized duties related to end-of-life care
   4. Assisting the registered nurse in carrying out the plan of care
   5. Preparing equipment and materials for treatment adhering to aseptic technique as required
   6. Assisting the patient in learning appropriate self-care techniques
   7. Assessing patient and family/caregiver response to care
   8. Ensuring communication of information to appropriate team members.