

Clinical Connections



FIRST HOSPICE CARE, INC.

When Quality of Life Matters Most

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Community Liaison*

A Monthly Newsletter for Physicians & Case Managers

May 2025 - Hospice for Non-Cancer Diagnoses: What to Watch For

Clinical Spotlight: Hospice for Non-Cancer Diagnoses - What to Watch For— Hospice is often associated with cancer, but nearly 60% of hospice patients in the U.S. have non-cancer diagnoses.

Recognizing eligibility in these conditions requires looking at patterns of decline rather than a single event.

Key indicators by condition:

- Heart Failure: NYHA Class III/IV, frequent hospitalizations, EF < 20%, symptoms at rest
- COPD: FEV1 < 30%, frequent exacerbations, O2 dependence, progressive weight loss
- Dementia: FAST stage 7C or beyond, inability to walk/speak/feed self, frequent infections
- Liver Disease: Ascites unresponsive to treatment, encephalopathy, INR > 1.5

- Renal Failure: Creatinine > 8 (non-diabetic) or > 6 (diabetic), patient declines dialysis
- Neurological Conditions: Progressive paralysis, difficulty swallowing, aspiration pneumonia

Earlier recognition allows us to provide meaningful support - clinically and emotionally

- when patients need it most.

Case Collaboration Highlight

Case: 82-year-old female with advanced dementia, bedbound, nonverbal, recurrent UTIs, and weight loss. Intervention: Hospice initiated for comfort-focused care. RN and aide visits provided consistency, and family received 24/7 support and respite care.

Outcome:

Reduced hospital use, improved symptom management, and caregiver relief.

Tools & Resources

- Non-Cancer Hospice Eligibility Reference
- FAST Scale Overview (Dementia)
- CHF/COPD Prognostic Tools

Fast Facts for Better Referrals

- Dementia is a top hospice diagnosis - not a barrier to eligibility
- Hospice supports home, ALF, and SNF settings
- Referral = support, not surrender

Contact & Referral Info

Direct Referral Line: (810) 407-6514 ask for Brooke Roberts or call her cell (517) 881-7512

Secure Fax: (810) 407-6751 Attention: Brooke Roberts

Community Liaison: Brooke Roberts

On-Call Hospice referral 24/7 @ (517) 881-7512