Referral Guidelines: Saint Michael's Hospital Outpatient Palliative Care and Symptom Improvement Clinic (PaCSI)

Introduction to SMH PaCSI

Our ambulatory outpatient Palliative Care and Symptom Improvement Clinic (PaCSI) provides comprehensive, patient-centered care aimed at improving the ***quality of life*** for patients with serious or life-limiting illnesses.
We focus on symptom management, care coordination, and psychosocial support ***in collaboration with primary care providers (PCPs) and specialists.***

Services We Provide

Clinical services

- **Symptom Management:** Address complex pain and aim for symptom improvement (dyspnea, nausea, anxiety, etc.)
- **Care Coordination:** Work with PCPs, specialists, and the hospital teams to provide continuity of care and avoid unnecessary hospitalizations.
- **Advance Care Planning:** Facilitate discussions around goals of care, values, advanced directives, and decision-making about treatment preferences.
- **Access to Specialized Medical Services:** paracentesis, thoracentesis, etc.
- **Facilitate Direct Admission:** Work to smooth transitions from clinic to impatient admission in cases of medical crisis.

Non-clinical services tailored for structurally vulnerable clients

- **Psychosocial Support:** Supportive counselling from a multidisciplinary team, tailored to the needs of the patient/family.
- **Education:** Provide educational resources for patients and families on disease processes, symptom management, disease trajectory, and available support services.
- **Support for Families and Caregivers:** Support for: caregiver burden, grief and bereavement and referral to counselling resources as needed.
- **Support for Daily Life Activities:** Arrange supports and referrals to community partners to help patients maintain their independence and to support their care preference in their communities.

Who to Refer to PaCSI

Patients with ***any*** life-limiting illness such as cancer, organ disease (COPD, CHF, ESRD, dementia, Parkinson's) at ***any stage*** of their illness, **concurrently** with life-prolonging therapies.

- Patients requiring complex pain and symptom management from a **life-limiting diagnosis** (dyspnea, anxiety, nausea, etc.).
- Patients who would benefit from holistic care to address physical, psychosocial, & spiritual needs.
- Patients wanting information about their illness trajectory & support with advance care planning.
- Patients who may benefit from methadone for pain (not for opiate replacement) or cannabis for symptom control.
- Patients requesting more information about Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD).

When Referral to Home Visiting Palliative Care Team May be Preferable

- An individual who requires urgent end-of-life care. Please make referral and call home visiting palliative service to ensure prioritization.

Form no. 90216 Dev. Mar6/25