POLICY STATEMENT: The Hope Hospice and Palliative Care (HHPC) Medical Director, physician employees, and contracted physician(s) of the hospice, in conjunction with the patient’s attending physician, are responsible for the palliation and management of the patient’s terminal illness and conditions related to the terminal illness.

PROCEDURES:
1. All physician employees and those under contract, function under the supervision of the HHPC Medical Director.

2. All physician employees and those under contract provide HHPC services directly or coordinate patient care with the patient’s attending physician, including the HHPC nurse practitioner.

3. If the attending physician is unavailable, the Medical Director/designee, contracted physician, and/or a hospice physician employee are responsible for meeting the medical needs of the patient.

4. Physicians must meet the qualifications and conditions as defined by Medicare and the State of Wisconsin to serve as a physician for HHPC patients; and have accomplished credentialing as required by HHPC.

5. A designated physician employees must actively participate in the coordination of all aspects of the patient’s hospice care, in accordance with current professional standards and practice, including participating in ongoing interdisciplinary comprehensive assessments, developing and evaluating the plan of care, and contributing to patient and family counseling and education;

6. A designated doctor of medicine or osteopathy who is an employee or under contract with HHPC is a member of the HHPC interdisciplinary group (IDG) and fulfills IDG responsibilities.

7. HHPC must designate a physician to serve as the Medical Director who:
   a. Is a doctor of medicine or osteopathy;
   b. Is an employee, or is under contract with HHPC;
   c. Determines that medications are utilized within accepted standards of practice and meet each patient’s needs;
d. Ensures that a system is established and maintained to document the disposal of controlled drugs;
e. Ensures that the medical needs of the patients are being met;
f. Provides liaison as necessary between the core team and the attending physician;
g. Has responsibility for the medical component of the HHPC’s patient care program; and
h. Supervises all physician employees and those under contract with HHPC.

8. When the HHPC Medical Director is not available, a physician designated by HHPC assumes the same responsibilities and obligations as the HHPC medical director.

9. The Medical Director, or physician designee performs the initial certification of terminal illness based on the review the clinical information for each hospice patient and provides written certification regarding the patient’s anticipated life expectancy if the illness runs its normal course. For patients who have elected the Medicare or Medicaid hospice benefit, life expectancy is certified as 6 months or less. Certification may not be done by the HHPC nurse practitioner.

10. The Medical Director, or physician designee performs recertification of the terminal illness based on the review of the patient’s clinical information before the recertification period for each patient to determine the patient’s anticipated life expectancy if the illness runs its normal course. For patients who have elected the Medicare or Medicaid hospice benefit, life expectancy is certified as 6 months or less. Recertification may not be done by the HHPC nurse practitioner.

Initial IDG approval date: 2/23/09
Review/updated/ and reapproved by IDG without changes 2/15/2011, 11/13/2012
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Approved by Hope Hospice Board of Directors 2/16/2009