



Pulmonary Disease

Hospice Eligibility Guidelines for Pulmonary Disease

Coverage Guidance

The following criteria are provided directly from Medicare guidelines and are used by physicians to support hospice eligibility.

Patients will be considered to be in the terminal stage of pulmonary disease (life expectancy of six months or less) if they meet the following criteria. The criteria refer to patients with various forms of advanced pulmonary disease who eventually follow a final common pathway for end stage pulmonary disease. (1 and 2 should be present. Documentation of 3, 4, and 5, will lend supporting documentation.):

1. Severe chronic lung disease as documented by both a and b:
 1. Disabling dyspnea at rest, poorly or unresponsive to bronchodilators, resulting in decreased functional capacity, e.g., bed to chair existence, fatigue, and cough: (Documentation of Forced Expiratory Volume in One Second (FEV1), after bronchodilator, less than 30% of predicted is objective evidence for disabling dyspnea, but is not necessary to obtain.)
 2. Progression of end stage pulmonary disease, as evidenced by increasing visits to the emergency department or hospitalizations for pulmonary infections and/or respiratory failure or increasing physician home visits prior to initial certification. (Documentation of serial decrease of FEV1 >40 ml/year is objective evidence for disease progression, but is not necessary to obtain.)
2. Hypoxemia at rest on room air, as evidenced by $pO_2 \leq 55$ mmHg; or oxygen saturation $\leq 88\%$, determined either by arterial blood gases or oxygen saturation monitors; (These values may be obtained from recent hospital records.) OR Hypercapnia, as evidenced by $pCO_2 \geq 50$ mmHg. (This value may be obtained from recent [within 3 months] hospital records.)
3. Right heart failure (RHF) secondary to pulmonary disease (Cor pulmonale) (e.g., not secondary to left heart disease or valvulopathy).
4. Unintentional progressive weight loss of greater than 10% of body weight over the preceding six months.
5. Resting tachycardia >100/min.

Important note

Hospice eligibility is determined by a physician based on the patient's overall clinical condition. Patients may still qualify even if they do not meet every criterion listed above, as long as documentation supports advanced disease and limited life expectancy.