Central West Adult Symptom Management Kit

Physician Information Package

What is the Central West (CW) Symptom Management Kit (SMK)?

The CW SMK is a standardized package of medications and related medical supplies provided to a patient who is approaching end-of-life (EOL) for the purpose of relieving unanticipated or rapidly escalating symptoms. It can be accessed by a prescribing physician, the visiting nurse in the community and authorized by the CW Community Care Access Centre (CCAC).

Timing of placement of the SMK requires careful consideration. Placing the SMK in the home prematurely may result in expiry of the medication. Placing the SMK in the home too late in the patient’s disease process could cause delay in management of his/her symptoms and may result in an Emergency Room (ER) visit, hospital admission or poor patient/family experience.

Why order a SMK?

While it is predictable that patients facing EOL are likely to experience increasing symptoms, sometimes the timing of those symptoms are not is not always predictable. Having an SMK available in the home ensures that the visiting nurse has an evidence based tool kit and instructions to make it possible for the nurse to respond quickly and appropriately to ease a patient’s unanticipated or rapidly escalating symptoms. At this time, SMK is the only available option for emergency symptom management for in-home patients when the patient’s physician is not immediately available.

The SMK is not intended to replace the need for proper clinical assessment leading to well defined care plans that properly identify potential issues. Responsible care planning would include the service providers communicating during the course of the care to ensure that appropriate PRN medications are in place for the patient.

Contraindications to ordering a SMK:

A SMK is contraindicated for clients at home when:

- the patient’s death is imminent and specific medications should be ordered for end-of-life care;

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• the patient is a child whose weight is such that medications and/or dosages require special consideration;
• the patient is incapable and there is no caregiver in the home who can be responsible for the SMK;
• there is evidence of substance abuse by the patient and/or family and no effective plan can be implemented to prevent medication misuse;
• there is evidence that the medications in the SMK could be used in ways other than the intended purpose; and/or
• the security of the SMK cannot be guaranteed in the home.

Process for the Administration of the Medications from the SMK:

• When the patient displays symptoms that require use of the medications contained in the SMK, the nurse in the home contacts the physician/NP for discussion. The medications is administered as per the physician’s order and documented. As the SMK is not replenished, care planning to ensure on-going symptom management is essential as the medications in the kit will only provide coverage for 12-24 hours. The nurse must contact the physician/NP to discuss adequate on-going prn medications.
• If the nurse is unable to contact the physician/NP when access to the kit is required, the nurse administers the medications, based on the indication provided in the SMK orders for the particular medication. The nurse informs the physician/NP as soon as possible.
• The utilized medications is now part of the treatment plan for the patient and is not returned into the SMK.
• When the kit is no longer needed in the home, the nurse instructs the family on how to dispose of the kit and provides feedback in the discharge report to the CCAC Care Coordinator.

Attachments:

• Central West Symptom Management Kit order form
• List of supplies provided with the SMK.
• Physician Facilitated Access
  Forms: [http://www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca/mbs/ssb/forms/ssbforms.nsf/FormDetail?OpenForm&ACT=RDR&TAB=PROFILE&SRCH=&ENV=WWE&TIT=eap&NO=014-4406-87](http://www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca/mbs/ssb/forms/ssbforms.nsf/FormDetail?OpenForm&ACT=RDR&TAB=PROFILE&SRCH=&ENV=WWE&TIT=eap&NO=014-4406-87)
• Or Call directly:** Section 8, telephone authorization at Tel # 1 866 811 9893 ext 3 and place the request. All that is required is your physician’s CPSO # and fax # for same day response. Alternatively, complete PCFA form which takes several weeks.
References

   Symptom Management Guidelines

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3. Towards a basic drug kit for the dying patient. (English) By: Fürst CJ; Lindqvist O; Tishelman C, Current Opinion In Supportive And Palliative Care [Curr Opin Support Palliat Care], ISSN: 1751-4266, 2012 Sep; Vol. 6 (3), pp. 386-90; Publisher: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; PMID: 22801469

4. The Use of Emergency Medication Kits in Community Palliative Care: An Exploratory Survey of Views of Current Practice in Australian Home-Based Palliative Care Services. (English) By: Bullen T; Rosenberg JP; Smith B; Maher K, The American Journal Of Hospice & Palliative Care [Am J Hosp Palliat Care], ISSN: 1938-2715, 2015 Sep; Vol. 32 (6), pp. 581-7; Publisher: Sage Publications; PMID: 24871345

5. The Use of Emergency Medication Kits in Community Palliative Care.
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