

ED CODE STATUS CONVERSATION GUIDE

Goal: Identify patients who **PREFER** symptom/comfort-oriented treatments **AND** consider the best possible outcome of mechanical ventilation/CPR “worse than death.”

Is this patient at high risk for poor outcome?

- ❖ Serious illness (ESRD, Home O₂, etc.) **OR**
- ❖ Frail elder **OR**
- ❖ Patient resides in a nursing home or LTAC
- ❖ Suspected COVID in age > 70



Does the patient have a DNR/DNI?

- ❖ YES → Confirm these choices
- ❖ NO → Proceed to ED Code Status Conversation



STEPS	WHAT TO ASK
Ask what they know	Hello. I am Dr. _____. I am sorry to meet you this way. What have you heard about what has happened today to your [loved one]?
Break bad news	Warning shot: I am afraid I have serious news. Would it be OK if I share? Headline: Your [mother] is not breathing well from [pneumonia/COVID]. with her other health issues, I am worried she could become/is very sick and may even die.
Establish urgency. Align	We need to work together quickly to make the best decisions for her care.
Baseline function	To decide which treatments might help your (mother) the most, I need to know more about her. What type of activities was she doing day-to-day before this illness?
Patient's Values (Select appropriate questions)	Has she previously expressed wishes about the kinds of medical care she would or would not want? If time is short, what is most important to her ? How much would she be willing to go through for possibility of more time? What abilities are so crucial to her that she would consider life not worth living if she lost them? Are there states she would consider worse than dying ?
Summarize	What I heard is _____. Did I get that right?
Make recommendations	We will use all available medical treatments that we think will help your loved one recover from this illness. For her, this means care focused on _____. We will do _____ and not do _____.
Forecast [If the they elect ICU care]	I hope these treatments will help your [mother]. We are still worried about how sick she is – ICU team will discuss with you how (your mother) is responding to treatment in the next 24 to 48 hours.