

MEMO

TO: Worldwide Employees, Providers, Affiliates and Patients

FROM: Frank Maddux, MD, FACP
Global Chief Medical Officer, Member of the Management Board

DATE: March 30, 2020

SUBJECT: Official Company Position Regarding Apportioning Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic Period and Addressing Global Care Standard Public Policy Variances

Purpose

The purpose of this advisory is to clearly state our medical position regarding 1) apportioning care access during the COVID-19 pandemic period and beyond; and 2) the differing care standards which are being articulated by many health systems, governments and societies.

Introduction

The SARS-COV2 Coronavirus has led to a pandemic of COVID-19 disease that has spread throughout the world creating social, economic and health care impact on most people's daily lives. Within the varied health delivery systems around the globe, many routines of daily life have changed and been influenced by public health concerns and social interventions. To mitigate and reduce viral spread, cohorts of people have been separated and isolated for public health protection. Within each country there have been measures to create social distancing and enable fastidious hygiene. Resource constraints are leading to decisions and discussions regarding access to critical health services for people infected with the virus and in need of care.

Our commitment and resolve to deliver care to people we are entrusted to serve is fundamental to our purpose and values. To every extent possible we aim to maintain access to the Fresenius Medical Care health delivery systems around the world. We have seen preparations by numerous organizations to anticipate the severity of the pandemic when surge COVID-19 diseased patients may overwhelm individual health system availability of facilities, ventilators and caregivers. During this unprecedented time, we wish to assure patients, staff and the community of our resolute position regarding our commitment to the uninterrupted care delivery for patients we serve.

Statement of Medical Principles

1. As always, Fresenius Medical Care will continue to care for people with illnesses such as advanced kidney disease, endovascular disease, and day surgical service needs around the globe. Along with our affiliated physicians, nurses, clinicians and caregivers we continue to provide life-saving products, therapeutic services and medical counsel for patients and health systems in more than 150 countries around the world.
2. The medical leaders of Fresenius Medical Care believe that patients with End Stage Kidney Disease (ESKD) deserve to receive life-saving renal replacement therapy despite resource challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic in both acute and chronic settings.
3. Interventions to reduce the spread of the virus and the impact on patients, staff and their families require adjustments that include personal protective equipment, isolation of people with COVID-19 infection or suspected infection, social distancing and other methods to mitigate viral spread.

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4. Despite the surge in viral infectious disease due to COVID-19 our medical guidance maintains the following key clinical care principles:
 - a. We believe patients should be able to continue with their prescribed treatment frequency to prevent known severe complications from inadequate dialysis.
 - b. We advocate that patients are offered and encouraged to dialyze for their specified and prescribed time as ordered by their attending nephrologist.
 - c. During this time patients with ESKD may need dialysis access surgery or interventions. We believe these are not elective procedures and should be delivered in a timely manner to avoid additional exposure to central venous catheters that can lead to additional known complications.
 - d. Patients needing renal replacement therapy, whether acute or chronic, should be offered treatment under the guidance of shared decision-making between the patient and their physicians. These discussions may include mechanical ventilation, dialysis, continuous renal replacement therapies and any other extracorporeal support that their care team feels may benefit and support the patients' care wishes.
 - e. Patients and families during the COVID-19 pandemic may need to adjust schedules or locations of treatments to provide the best opportunity to reduce the spread of the virus. These adjustments occur within the context of national, regional and local orders and guidance, but keep to the principles of care outlined in this document.
 - f. Clinical staff, manufacturing plant workers, employees, caregivers and patients are all heroes in the eyes of our medical leadership. Together we are working to maintain a high level of care support and protection of patients, staff and their families. To do this we have developed policies within each region to meet these goals as we care for patients under the guidance of national, regional and local regulation.
 - g. We continue to advocate and support thoughtful regulation and decisions that maintain our health care production and supply chains around the world while limiting any boundaries that disturb vital access to health care supplies and services.
 - h. We recognize the surge and capacity issues within healthcare and public systems that may become overwhelming during this crisis, but implore all authorities to recognize the need to make critical equipment, supplies, facilities and care delivery available to patients with advanced kidney diseases that need life-saving therapy at all times, including during this COVID-19 disease pandemic.
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Summary

The Global Medical Office of Fresenius Medical Care is represented around the world and is available to provide guidance, support and expertise in determining how to best continue to fight the COVID-19 pandemic with thoughtful decisions and open-minded dialogue. Our global medical leaders continue to support high quality, safe and efficient care. These principles have always been at the heart of our company and remain our guiding light during and after this crisis. Driven by our mission, and through a global organization that learns from each region around the world, we will continue to take actions and set the standard of care for each medical field in which we operate. We remain proactive, while engaging in open dialogue, communication, collaboration, innovation and sustainable methods for serving the many patients our products, systems of care and people encounter.

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