

- Margaret Mayfield is a 62 year old female who has been admitted from the ED to the critical care unit, after calling 911 due to severe fatigue, weakness, and fever. Her past medical history includes: dwarfism, HTN, hyperlipidemia, diabetes mellitus, and has a chronic Foley catheter due to urinary retention. She lives alone in an apartment and has no family members. Her friend is her POA for healthcare, and is the only contact listed. She has a home health aide visit once a week to assist her with bathing and all of her meals are delivered from local take-out restaurants. She utilizes a walker at home, however reports she hasn't been out of bed for the last several days due to weakness and fever. She uses a private ambulance service to go to physician appointments; this is the only time she gets out of her apartment for the last three years. Home medications include carvedilol, simvastatin, aspirin, and insulin. She does not have her medications with her and does not know the doses.

As the critical care nurse caring for her, what overall concerns do you have?

- My first concerns are regarding the severe fatigue, weakness, and fever along with chronic foley catheter. I would be first concerned for sepsis/infection. Another concern is Margaret not ambulating often enough. I am concerned for over extension of the bladder since she had chronic retention and does not seem that she has emptied the bag in several days. Being in bed for several days without getting up can be concerning for atelectasis in the lungs which can cause respiratory problems. Without getting out of the bed, she may not have been taking any of her medications which are important for her health. Specifically, insulin for the DM and Carvedilol for maintaining her blood pressure. It is also important to note that she does not know what doses she is suppose to take which is dangerous and could have life threatening consequences.

Describe ways in which you would communicate with her and her POA for healthcare. Include what topics you would discuss at this time in her hospitalization.

- I would discuss the importance of taking the correct medications doses, consider home health, signs and symptoms of an infection, closely monitoring her urine output, and changing her diet to get away from take out foods 24/7.

Discuss the ethical issues this case presents.

- Some ethical issues can be related to her health care provider. They were not able to recognize the needs for this patient or prioritize them effectively. The patients education was not up to standard, specifically concerning her lack of education for proper medication doses, s/s for infection, proper diet, hygiene, and considering financial struggles.

Discuss the legal issues this case presents.

- Legal issues in this case are the home health aide neglecting the foley catheter and that leading to her infection. It seems the home health aide wasn't properly taking care of Margaret and not seeing her as often as she needed too. Also, her friend that also acts as the POA seems to not understand what she is going through. The POA should be able to help Margaret in these situations and point her in the right direction for medical care.

In what ways will you serve as an advocate for Margaret?

- I will serve as her advocate by reeducating her on topics that should of already been taught be her provider. Those topics include medications, hygiene, diet, exercise, s/s and when to call when she needs help. I will contact needed specialties such as urology, case management, PT/OT, home health etc.

What other departments would you involve in her care, and why?

- Other departments that I would include in her care would be case management for resources that Margaret needs to have appropriate treatment. I would contact PT/OT for rehabilitation to regain her strength. I would involve urology for a consult related to possible infection and her ongoing urine retention. Call lab to get blood draws taken to watch for signs of sepsis and other concerns. I would also contact a dietitian so that she isn't eating at fast foods or take out restaurants all the time.