

Unit 1: Overview of Critical Care Nursing

ONLINE CONTENT (1H)

Unit Objectives:

- Select appropriate nursing interventions to manage common problems and needs of critically ill patients. (1,6,)*
- Develop strategies to manage issues related to caregivers of critically ill patients. (1,2,6)*
- Apply the principles of hemodynamic monitoring to the nursing and interprofessional management of patients receiving monitoring. (1,2,6,7)*

*Course Objectives

Assignment:

Review- Unit 1: Overview of Critical Care Nursing PowerPoint.
Read the case study, then answer the case study questions below.

CASE STUDY

- ▶ 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.

Case Study Questions

- ▶ As the critical care nurse caring for her, what overall concerns do you have?
 - ▶ Concerns I have for this patient are her symptoms of severe fatigue, weakness, and fever. I am also concerned for possible conditions like dehydration. Concerns outside of her physical symptoms are her lack of a support system and her mental health.
- ▶ 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 communicate very openly and honestly with her and her POA about treatment options and the plan of care. I would discuss with them the symptoms she is having, the plan to treat the symptoms and underlying cause, and any concerns they may have.
- ▶ Discuss the ethical issues this case presents.
 - ▶ An ethical issue with this case would be Margaret having her friend as POA for her healthcare decisions. The healthcare team would have to trust that the friend is making healthcare decisions that Margaret would want, and trust that the friend will not go against any of Margaret's wishes. Margaret loses her autonomy if something happens and she can no longer make decisions.
- ▶ Discuss the legal issues this case presents.
 - ▶ Legal issues in this case are the right to confidentiality and privacy and informed consent. If Margaret is unable to make healthcare decisions, then her friend will have to make decisions for her, which takes away Margaret's right of informed consent and confidentiality. Her friend would gain these rights on Margaret's behalf.
- ▶ In what ways will you serve as an advocate for Margaret?
 - ▶ I would advocate for any medical decisions she has made. I would make sure that these decisions are followed if she becomes unable to make these decisions for herself.
- ▶ What other departments would you involve in her care, and why?
 - ▶ Other departments I would involve are a dietician to make sure she is getting proper nutrients and physical therapy to make sure she is moving as much as she is able to.

Place your answers to these questions in the “Unit 1: Overview CC dropbox” by 1/7/2026 at 0800. Be prepared to share and discuss your thoughts in class.

In order to receive full credit (1 hour class time) for this assignment, it must be completed in its entirety by the due date/time assigned. Any assignments not completed in its entirety will result in missed class time and must be completed by the end of the semester to pass the course.