

## 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?

After reading the case study, I immediately have a few concerns. It worries me that she lives alone and does not have any family members to lean on for support in emergency situations like this. It is wonderful that she has a home health aide come and check in on her weekly, but I would feel more comfortable if she had more consistent supervision throughout the week. If she has not been out of bed for the last several days due to weakness and fever, that likely means that she has not been able to care for herself adequately. I am glad that she was taken to the hospital to receive the care she needs for her 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 with Margaret in a calm, concise manner, all while keeping in mind that she is feeling ill and probably anxious due to being admitted into the critical care setting. I would approach conversation by asking open-ended questions, assessing her symptoms and concerns she may be having. Since Margaret only has one emergency contact listed and no family for support, I would contact her POA to keep her updated on Margaret's health condition. During her stay in critical care, I would discuss treatment plans and medication reconciliation to obtain her home medications accurately. I also would want to discuss any social support concerns and provide resources for after discharge.

- ▶ Discuss the ethical issues this case presents.

An ethical issue that this case study presents is Margaret's possible inability to make decisions regarding her health independently. Her acute illness, fever, and weakness may impair her ability to make informed decisions. Respecting her autonomy is important, all while making sure her POA is present to make choices if Margaret is unable to.

- ▶ Discuss the legal issues this case presents.

From reading the case study, I know that Margaret does not have her home medications with her and does not know the doses. Legally, a medication reconciliation would be completed to avoid any medication errors. This could result in a legal liability.

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

I would advocate for Margaret by getting care for her in a timely manner. This would include early recognition and treatment for possible infection. I would also want to get cultures and monitor for possible sepsis. I would also consider the need for her to still have the foley catheter inserted, and replacement or removal as necessary to reduce the risk for a CAUDI.

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

I would like to get Margaret in touch with social work to assess her isolation risk with having no family, living alone, and not seeing very many people throughout the week. They would be able to help coordinate community

resources and support options. I would also contact pharmacy for Margaret's medication reconciliation, verifying all her home medications and doses.

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.*