

Terminal Ventilator Withdrawal

The Terminal Ventilator Withdrawal policy (previously called the Palliative Ventilator policy) provides guidance for the provision of comfort measures for a patient for whom continuing mechanical ventilation has been determined to be clinically inappropriate or unwanted by the patient.

Key updates:

- The Terminal Ventilator Withdrawal (TVW) policy must be utilized.
- The practitioner must electronically enter their own Terminal Ventilator Withdrawal Power Plan orders.
- There will be no verbal orders for the Terminal Ventilator Withdrawal Power Plan.
- For medication dosing outside of the TVW Power Plan, the practitioner must obtain approval from a Medical Director or VPMA.
- For use of medications not included on the TVW Power Plan, the practitioner must obtain approval from a VPMA.
- The practitioner or RN cannot administer TVW medications until verified by Pharmacy.
- For a Terminal Ventilator Withdrawal, the nurse will document: time of ventilator withdrawal; medication given; medication stopped; and the practitioner involved.
- Recommended practitioner documentation includes: conversation prior to DNR-CC order with patient/appropriate surrogate decision maker; order for DNR-CC in Power Chart; and comprehensive death note.
- Terminal Ventilator Withdrawal will occur only in an intensive care unit or designated inpatient unit. TVW will not be done in the Emergency Department; patient is required to be transferred to a designated inpatient unit for TVW.
- Pyxis override is not to be used for non-emergent situations, including Terminal Ventilator Withdrawal. It is appropriate in unplanned emergency situations, such as intubation.
- Verbal and telephone orders are to be limited and restricted to emergent situations; clinical situations when it is impractical for orders to be entered into the EMR; and situations when practitioners do not have access to remote computer devices or the patient's chart
- Nurses and pharmacists are expected to voice a concern if they think any situation is unsafe, and to escalate their concern up the Chain of Command as necessary.
- Nurses and pharmacists are always responsible for practicing within their scope.