Procedures to replace court application for CANH withdrawal

Veronica English, Head of medical ethics and human rights, BMA
Developing the guidance

- BMA, Royal College of Physicians and General Medical Council
- Core group
- Professional consultative group
- Families
- Patient support groups
- Focus groups
Joint BMA/RCP professional guidance on clinically-assisted nutrition and hydration (CANH)

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Scope

- England and Wales
- Adults who lack capacity to consent
- Decisions to give, continue or stop CANH
- Where CANH is the primary life-sustaining treatment being provided
- Where the patient is not expected to die within hours or days
Categories

• Neuro-degenerative conditions

• Patients with multiple co-morbidities or frailty who have a sudden-onset or rapidly progressing brain injury

• Previously healthy people in VS/MCS following sudden-onset brain injury
A proportionate approach to safeguards

Safeguards and scrutiny are proportionate to the consequences of the decision, based on:

• prognosis and the level of certainty; and

• the impact of making the ‘wrong’ decision for the individual.

The ‘wrong’ decision might be withdrawing too soon or continuing too long.
• Statement of legal and professional obligations

• A decision-making process

• Detailed practical guidance
Best interests assessments

- Holistic approach
- What is in the best interests of the patient?
- Proportionate approach
- What type of information?
- Weighing and balancing
- Best interests meetings
- Keep under review
Second opinions

If the patient is not expected to die within hours or days:

“take all reasonable steps to get a second opinion from a senior clinician (who might be from another discipline) who has experience of the patient’s condition but who is not already directly involved in the patient’s care”
Record-keeping and review

- Detailed record-keeping
- Easily extractable from the medical record
- Internal and external review
- National database for PDOC
Guidance and materials

- Guidance document
- Quick reference guide
- Decision-making flowchart
- Best interests infographic
- Implementation guide for employers/providers
- Family information leaflet
- Online training resources
All guidance and supporting documents available at:

www.bma.org.uk/canh