

## Guide For Pre-Discharge Care Discussion (aka Patient Debrief) After a Severe Maternal Event

- **Purpose:** to review what happened, answer questions, and plan on-going care with the patient and whoever the patient chooses to invite.
- **This document** is an informal checklist to help guide the discussion. The discussion would ideally include a senior physician and a nurse known to the patient, and a social worker. Known faces are important for support and starting the process of healing and closure.
- **Timing** should be after the patient is fully aware and near to discharge. This is not to replace earlier shorter care updates provided to the patient and family.

### Step 1: Assess Patient Understanding

- “Now that you have had a few days to process, can you recap in your own words what you understand about what you experienced.” “In a moment we will go through your story in detail.”
  - Do not stop the patient to correct information
- “What are your biggest concerns about what happened?”

### Step 2: Provide an overarching description of the condition

- Define (in lay terms) the condition that they experienced, including how common
- Briefly review risk factors and in general the diagnosis and treatment approaches

### Step 3: What happened with this specific patient

- Review in lay terms, how the patient presented and how the diagnosis was made
- What specific consultations and treatments were made
- How the patient responded to the treatments
- If and why they were transferred to a higher level of care (such as an ICU) and what happened there
- What has happened in the recovery phase
- Provide the summary document of the key elements of the diagnosis and care for her to share with her follow-up providers (see CMQCC Sepsis Toolkit for an example)
- Stress that this was not her fault

### Step 4: Pause for questions

- “I have just given you a lot of information  
What questions do you have? What are your concerns going forward?”

### Step 5: Review what to expect next

- Review plans for discharge, including who and when to see for follow up (ideal to identify an “anchor” provider)
  - The Discharge Follow-up Checklist is very useful
  - Early follow-up is almost always required
- Discuss return precautions and “what to watch for”, involving the patient’s family and/or those who may be helping support them
  - Emphasize the need for support from providers, family, and others
- Broadly review how this event may affect future health and future pregnancies, if relevant
- Emphasize the importance of continuing discussions
- Give opportunity for more questions