

Digital Palliative Care Comfort Observation and Symptom Assessment (COSA) - Paediatric

Background

The Palliative Care Comfort Observation and Symptom Assessment (COSA) – Paediatric Specialty Chart is an alternative observation and symptom assessment chart designed for admitted patients whose goals of care are more appropriately supported by a palliative, comfort-focused approach, rather than physiological deterioration detection using the Children's Early Warning Tool (CEWT). The COSA may be used across any inpatient ward and is not restricted to patients admitted under the specialist Paediatric Palliative Care Service. The decision to transition from the CEWT to the COSA should be based on the patient's goals of care, rather than diagnosis, prognosis or estimated life expectancy.

The original paper Palliative Care COSA was developed in 2020 by a group of paediatric palliative care experts at CHQ and other external expert stakeholders, as part of the broader Care Plan for the Dying Child project. The Palliative Care COSA has been built as a specialty chart within the Managing Deterioration module of ieMR, retaining the functionality and use of the paper version.

Business Rules

1. Patient eligibility

The COSA specialty chart may be used for any admitted patient on any inpatient ward at Queensland Children's Hospital where the goals of care are aligned with comfort, symptom assessment and individualised management without physiological deterioration detection using the digital early warning tool (CEWT and Q-ADDS).

The COSA is **not limited to patients receiving end-of-life care**. It may also be appropriate for patients admitted for:

- symptom management;
- uncontrolled pain or other distressing symptoms;
- deterioration in function associated with a life-limiting condition;
- complex palliative care needs where physiological abnormalities are anticipated and escalation according to CEWT parameters is not clinically appropriate; or

- other clinical circumstances where the treating team determines that the COSA better reflects the patient's goals of care.

2. Age criteria

Patients admitted to Queensland Children's Hospital who are less than **16 years of age** may be transitioned from the CEWT specialty chart to the **Paediatric COSA**.

Patients admitted to Queensland Children's Hospital who are **16 years of age or older** may be transitioned to the **Palliative Care COSA - Adult** specialty chart. These patients will continue to have access to the paediatric management strategies and clinical guidance via the **Additional Criteria** tab within the specialty chart.

3. Clinical authorisation

A decision to transition to the COSA may be recommended by **any treating medical service** in consultation with all other treating medical services involved in the admission. Use of the COSA is not limited to patients under the care of the specialist Paediatric Palliative Care Service.

Authorisation to transition from the CEWT specialty chart to the COSA requires **documented approval** by the **admitting Senior Medical Officer (SMO)** in the patient's medical record, confirming that the patient's goals of care are now more appropriately supported by the COSA specialty chart. This approval may be given as a verbal order, documented in the ieMR.

5. Specialist Paediatric Palliative Care Service consultation

For patients with life-limiting conditions who are not already known to the specialist Paediatric Palliative Care Service (PPCS), referral to or consultation with PPCS is **strongly recommended** to support symptom management, goals of care discussions and ongoing care planning. Though this consultation with PPCS is recommended, it is **not a mandatory requirement** for commencement or ongoing use of the COSA.

6. Admission type

The COSA may be commenced during:

- planned (elective) admissions; or
- unplanned or emergency admissions,

provided the patient meets the eligibility criteria and the required clinical authorisation has been documented.

7. COSA Specialty Chart and Vital Signs PowerForm

Only **one specialty chart** may be active at any one time. Patients should be managed using either the Children's Early Warning Tool (CEWT) specialty chart **or** the Palliative Care Comfort Observation and Symptom Assessment (COSA) specialty chart.

The Managing Deterioration Observations - Paediatric **PowerForm** may still be used to document vital signs while the COSA specialty chart is in use, where clinically indicated. The PowerForm will not input into the managing deterioration graph for trend analysis, nor will

any early warning score or alerts and escalation notifications be generated. Clinical management must instead be guided by the patient's goals of care, the COSA symptom assessments, and the treating team's clinical judgement.

8. Ongoing clinical review

The treating teams should review the patient's suitability for the COSA throughout the admission.

Where the patient's goals of care change and physiological deterioration detection using the CEWT becomes clinically appropriate, the patient should be transitioned back to the CEWT specialty chart.

Contact us

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