The Unbefriended Must Not Be Unprotected: Organizational & Clinical Management of Patients without Surrogates

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3 panelists

1. Problem nature & scope
2. Solution: University Hospitals

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3. Solution: Cleveland Clinic

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Terminology
Unbefriended
Unrepresented
Adult orphan

Patient w/o proxy
Incapacitated & alone

Definition
3 conditions

1

Lack capacity
No available, applicable AD or POLST
No reasonably available authorized surrogate

No AD / DPAHC appointed

Or named agent not available

Nobody available on default surrogate priority list
No reasonably available guardian / conservator

Nobody to consent to treatment

Big problem
3 - 4% nursing home population

> 50,000

16% ICU admits
5% ICU deaths

> 25,000

Growing problem
Law as causal factor

Scope of default surrogate lists
Spouse
Adult child
Parent
Adult sibling
Grandparent / adult grandchild
Aunt / uncle, niece / nephew
Adult cousin
Close friend

Existence of public guardian system

Slow
Expensive
Ethical Problems

Nobody to authorize treatment

3 ways to respond
1

No treatment

Wait until emergency (implied consent)
Physician acts without consent

Most common approach
Scrutiny
Vetting
References

