Maintaining Access to Life-Sustaining Nutrition

Key Facts to Consider:

Enteral and parenteral nutrition products are cost-effective solutions to improve healthcare outcomes and quality of life.

Enteral and parenteral nutrition products are specially formulated.

Enteral and parenteral nutrition products are safe and effective.

Access to medically-necessary, life-sustaining enteral and parenteral nutrition products can be limited.

The American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition defines nutrition support or nutrition support therapy as “Providing parenteral (PN) and/or enteral nutrition (EN) to address or prevent malnutrition.” The term enteral refers to nutrition administered via the gastrointestinal tract. It may be administered orally or via tube feeding. Further, an EN system is defined as “a system of providing nutrition directly into the gastrointestinal tract via a tube, catheter, or stoma that bypasses the oral cavity,” and a PN is defined as “the intravenous administration of nutrients.”

Nutrition support therapy is different from medical nutrition therapy (MNT) in that MNT refers to nutrition counseling services for the purpose of disease management.

The Healthcare Nutrition Council (HNC) works to ensure patients have access to the enteral and parenteral nutrition products they need. HNC continues to educate and collaborate with legislative and regulatory representatives, patient and consumer advocacy groups, academia, industry, and other stakeholders to promote awareness of the impact of nutrition on health and ensure people have access to enteral and parenteral nutrition products. Visit https://healthcarenutrition.org/

Limited or lack of access is related to:

- Insurance coverage
- Finances to purchase out of pocket
- Provider education
- Sufficient reimbursement for sustainable supplier distribution

Enteral and parenteral nutrition products can be life-sustaining part of patients’ comprehensive healthcare plans.

Unfortunately, many patients may have restricted access to the specific nutrition products they need.

Improved access is necessary.

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References