CHS Briefing on Heat Sensitivity

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Heat sensitivity workflow

- During intake, CHS uses objective clinical criteria to assess all patients for sensitivity to elevated temperatures.
- Conditions or medications that may make patients at higher risk for heat-related illness are documented in the patient's electronic health record. As of 2025, a report of "heat-sensitive" patients is automatically generated and transmitted to DOC.
  - Clinical staff can also manually designate a patient as heat-sensitive in scenarios not automatically flagged from the electronic health record.
- Patients can be designated as heat-sensitive at any point (e.g. new medication, diagnosis, clinical condition, etc.)

Heat sensitivity workflow

- On a nightly basis, CHS transmits to DOC a report with a list of names of patients newly designated as heat-sensitive. These are individuals who may be at higher risk of heat-related illness during high-heat periods.
- Heat sensitivity status is reflected in both DOC's electronic system and CHS' electronic health record.

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Heat sensitivity criteria

- Age greater than or equal to 65 years
- On heat-sensitive medication
- Requires infirmary care
- Documented history of hospitalization for heatstroke
- Sickle Cell Disease
- Parkinson's Disease
- Type I Diabetes
- Type II Diabetes Hgb A1C > 7.5
- BMI > 35
- Asthma not well controlled or requiring controller meds, PO steroids
- COPD
- History of congestive heart failure or myocardial infarction
- Dementia
- Moderate to profound intellectual disability
- Determined by medical or clinician/psychiatrist to be incapable of self-managing during periods of high heat because of their mental status
- Clinical criterion that, in the clinician's judgment, raises the risk of heat-related illness

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Preventing heat-related illness

- Benefits to automated Heat Sensitivity flagging system
  - Heat sensitivity status updated automatically with changes in clinical care
  - Year-round functionality
  - Reduced reconciliation of parallel DOC and CHS systems
  - Quality Assurance tools
- Identification of, and care for, heat-related illness (e.g. heat stroke)
  - CHS Medicine staff are alert for heat-related illness during high heat periods
  - Clinical staff are available 24/7 to assess patients in clinic for heat-related illness
  - UrgiCare (emergency medicine) physicians are also available for consultation and triage decisions for heat-related illness, including transfer to hospital