### Dyspnea Management Algorithm

Hyperlinks indicate additional information available in guideline sections above:
- **A** = Assessment
- **M** = Management
- **P** = Pharmacological Treatment

#### Dyspnea Screen
(0–10 scale)

#### Assessment
- History
- Physical assessment
- Laboratory investigation *(A4)*
- Imaging *(A5)*

#### Identify and treat reversible causes

#### Treat hypoxemia with supplemental oxygen *(M2)*
(if present)

#### Treat symptoms of dyspnea

#### Comfort measures *(M5)*
1. Air flow (fan) / environment
2. Positioning
3. Loose clothing
4. Relaxation
5. Modify lifestyle

#### Pharmacological Treatments

### Baseline dyspnea
- Opioid *(P1)*
- +/- Neuroleptic *(P3)*
- +/- Steroid *(P4)*
- +/- Benzodiazepine *(P2)* (for anxiety)

### Incident dyspnea
- Timed opioid (PO/SC/SL) *(P1)*
- Neuroleptic (SC) *(P3)*

#### Refractory dyspnea

#### Palliative Care Consult

#### Unremitting dyspnea

#### Palliative Sedation

### Reversible Causes of Dyspnea

#### Cardiovascular
- Anemia
- Arrhythmia
- Heart failure
- Deconditioning
- Myocardial ischemia
- Pericardial effusion
- Pulmonary emboli

#### Respiratory
- Bronchial obstruction
- Bronchospasm/asthma
- COPD/emphysema
- Infection
- Interstitial Fibrosis
- Lymphangitic carcinomatosis
- Pleural effusion
- Radiation pneumonitis

#### Other
- Anxiety/panic disorder
- Ascites
- Cachexia
- Neuromuscular disease

#### Education (patient and caregiver)
- Breath control
- Energy conservation
- Use of breakthrough medications
- Proper inhaler technique

### Crisis dyspnea
- Opioid (IV/SC) *(P1)* and Benzodiazepine (IV/SC) *(P2)*