



CAPC Designation Provides Standard Competencies in Pain Management, Symptom Management, Communication Skills, and Dementia Care

CAPC's online curriculum provides clinicians from any specialty with skills to improve quality of life for people living with serious illness. CAPC courses are case-based, interactive, and provide free continuing education credits.

Upon completing all courses in the Pain Management, Symptom Management, Communication Skills, or Best Practices in Dementia Care and Caregiver Support units listed below, clinicians earn **CAPC Designation**. The following checklists indicate the clinical competencies taught in each unit.

Pain Management Competencies

- ✓ Perform a comprehensive pain assessment
- ✓ Recognize specific pain types and patterns that guide safe and effective treatment
- ✓ Select a medication class that matches the patient's pain type and pattern
- ✓ Refine drug choice, accounting for benefits, side effects, and risks of each drug class
- ✓ Select the minimum effective medication appropriate for treating pain for the seriously ill patient
- ✓ Integrate patient and family factors into a safe pain management strategy
- ✓ Integrate routine and universal formal risk assessment and risk stratification for substance use
- ✓ Design an opioid trial based on pain type, patterns, and patient factors
- ✓ Understand opioid pharmacokinetics that impact dose scheduling
- ✓ Integrate U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) guidelines into valid prescription writing practices
- ✓ Assess opioid effectiveness accounting for side effects, risks, and patient/family goals
- ✓ Assess for "Red Flag" behaviors suggestive of substance use disorder
- ✓ Use safe and appropriate pain management strategies in seriously ill patients at risk for or with concurrent substance use disorder
- ✓ Convert from one opioid to another
- ✓ Account for incomplete cross tolerance when changing between opioid agents
- ✓ Convert to a single opioid when patients are on multiple opioids and/or routes of delivery
- ✓ Recognize the signs and symptoms of opioid toxicities
- ✓ Manage opioid toxicities and side effects including safe tapering
- ✓ Manage pain in imminently dying patients
- ✓ Recognize when and how to use Patient Controlled Analgesia

Symptom Management Competencies

- ✓ Recognize the prevalence and type of symptom burden for patients with serious illness
- ✓ Use validated screening tools to assess for:
 - Nausea and vomiting
 - Dyspnea
 - Constipation
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
- ✓ Apply the medical evidence to develop a pharmacologic and/or non-pharmacologic management plan for the following symptoms:
 - Nausea and vomiting
 - Dyspnea
 - Constipation
 - Anxiety
 - Depression

Communication Skills Competencies

- ✓ Assess patient and/or surrogate understanding of his/her clinical condition
- ✓ Get permission to share difficult news, discuss prognosis, and to begin conversations about advance care planning
- ✓ Communicate serious news clearly
- ✓ Confirm patient and family understanding of serious clinical news
- ✓ Acknowledge and respond to patients' emotional reactions in conversation
- ✓ Deliver a clear assessment of prognosis to the patient and acknowledge emotional impact
- ✓ Elicit information about what is most important to the patient in the context of the illness
- ✓ Explore the patient's values as they influence the care options, or guide surrogate decision-makers to explore the values and goals of the patient
- ✓ Conduct a family meeting
- ✓ Identify and articulate patient and family values that influence treatment decisions
- ✓ Define the goals of advance care planning conversations for the patient
- ✓ Explore the future with the patient in a non-threatening way through advance care planning discussion

Dementia Care Competencies

- ✓ Communicate clearly about a diagnosis of dementia, including assessing patient understanding, using appropriate language, and responding to emotional cues throughout the conversation
- ✓ Discuss physiological changes in the brain that cause various symptoms of dementia and what to expect at each stage of the disease
- ✓ Evaluate decision-making capacity in people living with dementia and facilitate patient-centered decisions
- ✓ Engage people living with dementia and their caregivers in future planning, including conversations around advance care planning, personal care, living, legal, and financial arrangements, driving, and home safety
- ✓ Include caregivers of people living with dementia in care planning
- ✓ Use validated assessment tools to identify cognitive impairment, and assess both patient and caregiver needs
- ✓ Refer people living with dementia and their caregivers to community-based support services, including respite care, caregiver education, support groups, and safe return programs
- ✓ Interpret behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia as communication of unmet needs, and offer appropriate nonpharmacologic and pharmacologic interventions to meet those needs
- ✓ Assess for depression and apathy syndrome in people living with dementia, and offer nonpharmacologic and pharmacologic treatments as needed
- ✓ Assess for and treat pain and infections in people living with dementia utilizing nonpharmacologic and pharmacologic therapies as appropriate
- ✓ Treat sleep disturbances and swallowing disorders in people living with dementia using nonpharmacologic and (if appropriate) pharmacologic therapies
- ✓ Discuss complicated medical decisions with family and other caregivers of people living with advanced dementia, including treatment of infections and use of long-term feeding tubes