



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

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, or Communication Skills 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