

# Additional Skills for Physicians Who Focus Primarily on Supporting People with Serious Illness

---

This Learning Pathway contains a comprehensive set of training and tools to help physicians who focus primarily on supporting people with serious illness address the unique needs of patients and families. Clinical topics include assessing patient needs and concerns, understanding patients' goals for care, addressing symptom burden, and helping patients to avoid crises and plan for the future.

## Assess the Needs and Concerns of Patients

### Introduction to Palliative Care

An introduction to palliative care, how it is delivered, its impact on quality of life, and the growing population of patients who need it.

### Revised Edmonton Symptom Assessment System (ESAS-r)

Assesses for nine symptoms experienced by patients with serious illness and quantifies their severity. Alberta Health Services.

### PHQ-4 Validated Screening Tool for Anxiety and Depression

Brief (4-question) screening tool for anxiety and depression.

### Social Needs Screen

Assessment tool and resource list to address social risk factors.

### FICA Spiritual Assessment Tool

Short conversation guide to elicit information about a patient's spiritual history and preferences.

### Zarit Burden Interview (ZBI-12)

Self-reported caregiver assessment.

## **CAPC Palliative Care Referral Criteria**

Checklist of triggers for referral to a specialty palliative care team.

# **Strengthen the Clinician-Patient Relationship and Understand Care Goals**

## **Delivering Serious News to Patients and Caregivers**

Learn best practices for having patient-centered conversations about a serious illness diagnosis. These discussions are the foundation of building a trusting clinician-patient relationship.

## **Communicating Prognosis to Patients and Caregivers**

Learn how to effectively discuss prognosis with patients and their caregivers to ensure understanding and set the context for decision-making.

## **Leading Goals of Care Conversations**

Learn best practices for building trust, eliciting patient values, and having patient-centered conversations about goals of care.

## **Billing and Coding for Advance Care Planning (ACP) Services**

Requirements, best practices, documentation requirements, and time thresholds for Advance Care Planning (ACP) services.

## **Unconscious Bias: What It Is, How It Influences Health Care, and What You Can Do About It**

Defines unconscious bias and how it influences patient care, and provides ways to reduce the impact of unconscious bias on care delivery.

## **Talking with Patients About Hospice**

This resource lists step-wise tips to foster comfortable, productive dialogue for 'the hospice conversation'.

# **Manage Pain and Symptoms**

## **Course 7: Advanced Opioid Prescribing: Converting to Long-Acting Opioids**

Learn how to convert from short-acting to long-acting opioids, and calculate rescue doses for breakthrough pain using updated equianalgesic tools.

## **Course 9: Using Buprenorphine for Chronic Pain and Opioid Use Disorder**

Determine which patients may benefit from buprenorphine as a treatment for pain and opioid use disorder (OUD), and learn how to transition patients to buprenorphine.

## **Course 10: Managing IV Opioids**

Learn how to convert patients back and forth from oral to IV opioid formulations, how to prescribe patient-controlled analgesia (PCA), and how to treat acute pain crises.

## **Up To Date: Approach to the Adult Patient with Fatigue**

Non-pharmacological and pharmacological strategies for managing fatigue. Published and maintained by Up To Date.

## **Cognitive Assessment Tools**

Recommended validated cognitive assessment tools.

## **Anxiety**

After completing this course, learners will be equipped with evidence-based strategies to identify and treat anxiety in patients living with a serious illness.

## **Constipation**

Constipation occurs in at least 70% of patients living with a serious illness and often goes unrecognized. After completing this course, learners will have the tools to successfully identify and manage the impact of constipation.

## **Depression**

After completing this course, learners will have the tools to accurately identify and treat depression in patients living with a serious illness.

## **Dyspnea**

After completing this course, learners will have the tools they need to manage dyspnea, including the physical causes of shortness of breath and the emotional impact on the patient.

## **Nausea/Vomiting**

Nausea and vomiting are common symptoms of serious illness and can cause dangerous complications. After completing this course, learners will be equipped with practical skills to identify, manage, and reduce these symptoms.

# **Prevent Crises and Help Patients Plan Ahead**

## **Coordinating Care and Planning Ahead**

Guidance for all clinicians on improving communication and ensuring smooth transitions of care for patients living with serious illness.

## **Supporting the Caregivers of People with Serious Illness**

This course offers tools and guidance for assessing and addressing the needs of caregivers of people with serious illness.

## **Safe and Age-Friendly Care for Older Adults**

This course provides context and best practices for identifying older adults at risk for poor outcomes, including falls, delirium, and caregiving challenges.

## **Supporting Patients with Serious Illness to Plan Ahead**

Considerations for clinicians, patients, and families upon diagnosis, including advance care planning, personal care needs, legal and financial planning, work and retirement planning, and prevention of common medical risks.

## **ePrognosis**

Geriatric prognosis calculator based on a systematic review of prognostic indices, with links to disease-specific prognosis tool when applicable. Includes communication tools for talking with patients about prognosis, and can be used on a mobile phone or tablet. Created and maintained by the University of San Francisco.

## **FindHelp.org**

National database of community services - enter a zip code and locate assistance with food, housing, health services, care needs, and other resources.

## **View this page online**

You must be [logged in](#) to have full access to these resources. Not sure if you have a CAPC account? [Check here](#) to create one.