

# Nephrology

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Patients with chronic kidney disease and/or end-stage kidney disease face specific symptoms and challenges, particularly when deciding on treatment. This Learning Pathway includes continuing education courses and other resources to strengthen communication, manage common symptoms, and integrate palliative care practices and specialists in patient treatment.

## Introduction to Palliative Care for Health Professionals

### 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.

## Communication Skills

### 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.

### Care Planning Conversations

Learn techniques to help patients and their caregivers plan for the future, both during the early stages of a serious illness and as a disease progresses.

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

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

## **Communication Strategies - Unexpected Diagnosis of End Stage Kidney Disease**

This script provides skills and techniques to discuss treatment choices and expectations with patients who have unexpectedly lost viable kidney function.

## **Symptom Management Skills**

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

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

### **Kidney Disease Quality of Life Instrument**

Validated screening tool to assess burdens and impacts of kidney disease on patients.

### **How to Identify and Treat Fatigue in Our Patients with Serious Illness**

Two palliative care clinicians provide the ins-and-outs of assessing and treating fatigue in patients with serious illness.

### **Uremic Pruritus Management Protocol**

A recommended process to relieve pruritus with available treatments.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Depression**

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

### **Restless Leg Syndrome Management Protocol**

A recommended process to relieve restless leg syndrome with available treatments.

# Pain Management Skills

## Course 1: Pain and its Impact on Our Patients

Learn to define and characterize pain, recognize the prevalence of pain, understand disparities in pain management based on race, ethnicity, and gender.

## Course 2: How to Perform a Comprehensive Pain Assessment

Learn the components of a comprehensive pain assessment and its importance in safe and effective pain management.

## Course 3: Matching Treatment to Pain Type

Gain an overview of pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic pain treatments, including risks and benefits, and learn how to match the analgesic to pain type.

## Course 4: Prescribing an Opioid

Learn how to decide on an appropriate opioid, route of delivery, and dose, and understand how to prescribe for incident and breakthrough pain.

## Course 5: Practice Prescribing an Opioid

Practice prescribing initial opioid doses for different pain types and characteristics. Learn to adjust dosing as needed to manage pain effectively.

## Course 6: Creating a Pain Treatment Plan and Monitoring Effectiveness

Learn to develop a pain treatment plan with realistic goals and proper documentation, and implement universal precautions to help with the risk of opioid use disorder.

## Course 8: Problems with Opioid Prescribing: Is it an Opioid Use Disorder?

Learn how to identify and diagnose opioid use disorder (OUD) and practice communicating with patients about OUD and pain management.

# Integrating Palliative Care and Palliative Approaches into Kidney Care

## Kidney Patient Referral Criteria for Specialty Palliative Care

Summary of indicators for consultation with a specialty palliative care team.

## Palliative Care vs. Hospice

A clarification distinguishing palliative care - available during any treatment - and hospice, which is a specific Medicare benefit.

## Kidney Supportive Care: Core Curriculum 2020

Comprehensive article including the basics to know for holistic patient-centered care.

### **[An Interview with Dr. Edward Machtinger: Lessons of Trauma-Informed Care](#)**

An expert provides background on trauma-informed care, explains the markers of trauma, and provides guidance on screening.

### **[Coalition for Supportive Care of Kidney Patients](#)**

A national coalition promoting effective communication among patients, families, healthcare providers, and payers to ensure that patients receive the care that is important to them.

### **[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 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.

### **[Coordinating Care and Planning Ahead](#)**

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

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