



HOSPICE INSIGHTS

Volume 99: Joint Statement on Pain Management: Minnesota Boards of Medical Practice, Nursing, and Pharmacy **January, 2006**

Pain management is a significant issue in health care today. It is estimated that 50 - 75 million Americans experience pain annually. Thirty to fifty percent of patients undergoing cancer treatment experience pain. The effects of unmanaged pain are serious and wide-ranging and yet, pain is widely under-treated. Untreated or inadequately treated pain impacts patients' quality of life and increases health care costs. Factors cited in the under-treatment of pain include concerns about causing addiction or tolerance; inadequate knowledge of controlled substances and pain management; fear of scrutiny and discipline by regulatory agencies; inadequate assessment; and patient reluctance to report pain or to take pain medications.

The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) guidelines on pain management state, "Patients have the right to appropriate assessment and management of pain." It is, therefore, incumbent upon Minnesota physicians, nurses and pharmacists to work cooperatively and effectively to address the dimensions of pain and to provide maximum pain relief with minimal side effects. Towards that end and in the interest of public protection, the Minnesota Boards of Medical Practice, Nursing and Pharmacy issue the following joint statement.

To effectively assist patients in the management of pain, health care professionals should, within their scope of practice:

- Consistently and thoroughly assess all patients for pain. If pain is reported, the pain should be evaluated with a complete history and physical with laboratory and diagnostic testing, if indicated;
- Work collaboratively in a multi-disciplinary approach to develop and implement an individualized, written treatment plan utilizing pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic interventions with specific objectives for the patient;
- Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the treatment plan, using a consistent, developmentally appropriate, standardized pain scale, and make adjustments as needed;
- Document all aspects of pain assessment and care in a timely, clear, consistent, complete and accurate manner;
- Anticipate and effectively manage side effects of pain medications;
- Provide adequate and culturally appropriate information to patients and family members or caregivers to support patients in making informed decisions and participate in the management of their pain;
- Be aware of the risks of diversion and abuse of controlled substances and take appropriate steps to minimize these risks.
- Recognize individuals with chemical dependency may experience pain requiring medications, including opioids, and may require specialized management;
- Consult with, and refer patients to, other providers when appropriate;
- Develop organization-appropriate and evidence-based policies and protocols for pain management;
- Become and remain knowledgeable regarding effective pain management; and
- Comply with all state and federal laws and regulations regarding prescribing, dispensing, and administering legend drugs, including controlled substances.

Resources:

American Pain Foundation
201 N. Charles St., Suite 710
Baltimore MD 21201-4111
1-888-615-PAIN (7246)

American Pain Society
www.asmpainsoc.org

Drug Enforcement Agency
“Prescription Pain Medications: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers for the Health Care Professional and Law enforcement Personnel.”
http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/faw/pain_meds_fawa.pdf

Federation of State Medical Boards: Model Policy for Use of Controlled Substances for the Treatment of Pain
www.fsmb.org

“Guideline for Pain Management.” Kansas State Board of Nursing (2001).

“Joint Statement on Pain Management in End-of-Life Care.” North Carolina Boards of Nursing, Pharmacy and Medicine (1999).

Mayday Pain Project
www.painandhealth.org

“MNA Position Statement: Pain Management.” Minnesota Nurses Association, (2000).

“Pain Management Policy.” California Board of Registered Nursing. (1999).

“Position Statement on Pain Management and Control of Distressing Symptoms in Dying Patients.” American Nurses Association. (2003).

Mission Statement

Hospice of the Twin Cities’ mission is to enhance the quality of the lives of our patients and their families by providing respectful care based on maintaining dignity, alleviating physical, psychosocial, and spiritual suffering, advocating for fundamental rights, and affirming the sacred value of life.

