



Inclusion of pain management in the AIM¹ standards

CCHSA has enhanced the concept of pain management in its AIM standards:

Pain focused criteria are enhanced in the upcoming version of our Standards Document to be used in 2005. In the revised standards, a pain-focused criterion contains specific actions to meet the standard. Actions relate to assessment, management, related monitoring, organizational responsibility, and includes assessment measures. Criteria that incorporate pain management are now more evidence-based and have a greater emphasis on the organization's accountability to train and update staff, patients and families on pain management options and strategies.

Sections where reference to “pain management” in the standards can be found:

New reference to pain management can be found in Acute Care Standard 13.0, under the sub-section Delivering Services, which covers the topics delivering services, medications, and clients' responsibilities. Criterion 13.11 specifically addresses the team's processes for assessing and managing the client's pain. This criterion is included in all care sections of the standards where appropriate for the management of pain, from Cancer Care, Maternal/Child, Rehabilitation and Long-Term Care, to Acquired Brain Injury, Ambulatory Care and Critical Care. Processes addressed in this criterion are as follows:

- The team knows how to assess pain using standardized clinical measures
- All clients receive a pain assessment on admission and routinely for those with painful procedures and/or conditions
- The team knows how to implement pain management strategies appropriately and routinely monitors their effectiveness
- The organization trains and updates staff on pain relief strategies that are evidence-based and that guide them to minimize risk factors to reduce or prevent adverse consequences e.g. unrelieved acute pain can have consequences such as persistent pain.
- The team documents findings and communicates with colleagues as appropriate
- The team identifies and consults with experts in pain when a complex problem occurs
- The team educates patients and families on pain management options and strategies for appropriate relief

How pain management has been considered in the context of patient safety:

Increasingly, pain management is being discussed in relation to patient safety because of inadequate pain relief, under-medication and related interference in activities for patients who have been discharged after surgery. Currently, the safe use of medication practices address the use of opioids. To reflect this, our medical standards also include reference to opioids when needed in our guidelines.

¹Achieving Improved Measurement