

# Clinician Training to Improve Outcomes for Patients with Serious Illness

Health systems across the country are leading clinical training initiatives to reduce crises and strengthen quality of care for their sickest patients.

CAPC member organizations have unlimited access to more than fifty online training courses in skills needed to care for patients with serious illness.

Browse the list below to learn why health systems are engaged in training their clinicians in core skills to care for patients with serious illness.

**Courses provide free continuing education credits for:**

- Physicians
- Advanced practice providers
- Nurses
- Social workers
- Case managers

**ABIM-boarded physicians also receive MOC points.**

| Health System Goal  | How Training Can Help  | Who to Train and Resources to Use   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Build Resilience and Relieve Suffering During COVID-19</b>   |  |   |
| <p><b>COVID-19:</b> Relieve suffering for patients - and distress for clinicians - during the COVID-19 pandemic</p> | <p>The number of people taking CAPC courses nearly doubled in the spring of 2020 as the pandemic took hold – that’s because clinicians were navigating tough conversations with patients and families, providing relief from symptoms, and supporting families who could not visit their loved ones face-to-face. CAPC’s COVID-19 Learning Pathways train clinicians in relevant skills for care in the COVID era.</p> | <p>Every health professional: <a href="#">Navigating difficult conversations and discussing goals of care</a></p> <p>ED, ICU, Hospitalist teams: <a href="#">Managing shortness of breath and other symptoms</a></p> <p>Access CAPC’s COVID-19 Learning Pathways for clinical education <a href="#">here</a> – or browse CAPC’s <a href="#">COVID-19 toolkit</a> for a suite of tools and planning resources.</p> |

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| <b>Improve Outcomes for Patients with Serious Illness</b>   |   |   |
| <p><b><u>Pain</u></b>: Reduce adverse opioid events while improving the patient experience of pain</p>                            | <p>To manage pain safely and appropriately, prescribers need training in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selecting the lowest-risk, highest-efficacy pain regimen for each patient</li> <li>• Evidence-based opioid prescribing guidelines, including monitoring and tapering</li> <li>• Assessing risk for substance use disorder</li> <li>• Mitigating the risk of opioid misuse</li> </ul> | <p>All clinicians who care for patients with serious illness-related pain benefit from <a href="#">education in safe opioid prescribing and risk mitigation</a>. This includes primary care, hospital medicine, oncology, cardiology, critical care, and others.</p> <p>CAPC provides prescribing guidance for providers, as well as pain management education for nurses, social workers, and case managers.</p> |
| <p><b><u>Age-friendly care</u></b>: Mitigate the risk of poor outcomes for older, frail adults by providing age-friendly care</p> | <p>Common but preventable risk factors lead to preventable crises, ED utilization and readmissions for older adults: Polypharmacy, anticholinergic burden, lack of caregiver support, lack of shared decision-making.</p>   | <p>Clinicians working in the following areas will benefit from CAPC's training in <a href="#">how to provide age-friendly care</a>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary care</li> <li>• Surgery</li> <li>• Hospital Medicine</li> <li>• Outpatient specialists</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b><u>Goal-concordant care</u></b>: Ensure that the care you provide reflects what matters to patients</p>                     | <p>Clinicians often do not receive pre-professional training in how to have difficult conversations with seriously ill patients and their families – but these conversations are needed to make sure that care plans reflect patients' goals and values.</p>  | <p>All clinicians benefit from training in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to talk with patients about their goals for care</li> <li>• Having family meetings</li> <li>• Advance care planning</li> <li>• Discussing prognosis</li> </ul> <p>Browse CAPC's Communication Skills courses <a href="#">here</a>.</p>   |
| <p><b><u>Dementia</u></b>: Empower clinicians to improve quality of life and reduce crises for</p>                                | <p>People with dementia have <a href="#">higher ED utilization, readmissions, and mortality rates</a> than those without dementia – and clinicians often report feeling</p>   | <p>CAPC's <a href="#">Dementia Care Best Practices curriculum</a> is particularly beneficial for clinicians working in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary care</li> <li>• Emergency medicine</li> </ul>  |

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| patients living with dementia  | powerless to help. Train clinicians to support patients and families through dementia care best practices.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospital medicine</li> <li>• Case management</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Quality care:</b> Reduce crisis ED visits and hospitalizations for patients living with serious illnesses | Nearly 80% of crisis ED visits and hospitalizations (excluding pneumonia) are due to exacerbations of chronic symptoms – with training, clinicians can manage these symptoms and improve care quality. | Train outpatient specialists, primary care, and hospitalists to manage common symptoms using CAPC’s <a href="#">Symptom Management Designation curriculum</a> . |
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### Create a Common Culture of Care through Onboarding Protocols and Teaching Programs

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| <b>Teaching programs:</b><br>Embed communication and symptom management training in your teaching programs.                      | Health systems use CAPC courses to supplement undergraduate, graduate, and fellowship teaching programs for physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and others.  | Clerkship and residency directors choose the <a href="#">right courses</a> for their trainees.<br><br>Self-study courses provide baseline education for all trainees – in many health systems, the specialty palliative care team reinforces this teaching through face-to-face workshops or rotations. |
| <b>Social worker and psychosocial skills:</b><br>Standardize social work competencies in care for patients with serious illness. | Whether through onboarding requirements or systematic professional development, health systems train social workers in recognition of their key role supporting patients and families through the stressors of a serious illness, and connecting them to needed services.         | CAPC’s <a href="#">Social Work Serious Illness Designation</a> contains comprehensive education in key social work skills for the seriously ill patient population.   |
| <b>Nursing skills:</b><br>Standardize nursing competencies in care for patients with serious illness.                            | Whether through onboarding requirements or systematic professional development, health systems train nurses in recognition of their key role in communicating with patients and families, assessing for symptoms and other sources of distress, and supporting family caregivers. | CAPC’s <a href="#">Registered Nursing Serious Illness Designation</a> contains comprehensive education in key nursing skills.<br><br>Provide <a href="#">standard onboarding</a> training for all nurses – or get started by training your system’s <a href="#">critical care nurses</a> .              |

For training recommendations by discipline, specialty, or clinical topic, see CAPC’s [Learning Pathway Library](#).