



IOWA FOUNDATION FOR MEDICAL CARE

10 Ways to Improve Your Pain Quality Measure Score

1. **Pain is everyone's responsibility.** Educate everyone (all staff, residents, family, volunteers, etc.) to consider every resident for risk of pain, to learn to recognize pain and to know the process to report pain.
2. **Start an interdisciplinary pain team** that includes a member from every department at every level to facilitate a comprehensive, aggressive pain program.
3. **Make pain the 5th vital sign.** Screen for pain daily, upon admission, with every MDS, and with any change in behavior or condition. Also, be sure to ask questions using various synonyms for pain like discomfort and aching.
4. **Use a consistent pain assessment scale** that addresses location, intensity, duration, what improves and worsens pain and response to any treatment. Document and communicate your findings consistently.
5. **Know your residents.** Observe and document baseline behaviors in every resident including the cognitively impaired.
6. **Review PRN pain medication usage** for each resident and change to a regularly scheduled medication when there is a pattern of consistent PRN pain medication usage.
7. **Prevent pain or reduce pain by giving pain medication before an activity, therapy, treatments such as wound care, or after a fall.** Remember, coding for pain on the MDS should not be automatic when meds are given to prevent pain rather than waiting for the resident to complain of pain.
8. **Learn what pharmacological and non-pharmacological pain treatments work for each individual resident.** Non-pharmacological treatments such as range of motion exercise, heat therapy, whirlpool, art/music therapy, etc. may reduce the dosage or frequency of pharmacological treatments.
9. **Consult physician, resident, family and staff** in pain management and care planning and monitor, evaluate and document the effects of the pain interventions.
10. **Use best practices in pain management** such as those found in the fast facts documents on the MedQIC Web site (www.medqic.org).