

2019

Pain Management Curricula in Oregon Educational Institutions

A Review of the Oregon Pain Management Commission



Oregon
Health
Authority

Acknowledgments

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Oregon Revised Statute 413.572 requires the Oregon Pain Management Commission (OPMC) to review pain management curricula of Oregon educational institutions. The commission reports its findings to the Legislative Assembly each odd-numbered year. In addition, the commission may make recommendations about legislation as needed to ensure that adequate information about pain management is included in the curricula reviewed.

During the 2017-19 biennium the OPMC members reviewed pain management curricula from four nursing programs, including:

1. OHSU School of Nursing, Portland (Marquam Hill) Campus
2. Linfield School of Nursing, Portland (Good Samaritan Hospital) Campus
3. University of Portland School of Nursing
4. Walla Walla University School of Nursing, Portland (Adventist Hospital) Campus

Commissioner Kim Jones, FNP, PhD, Professor of Nursing and Medicine at Oregon Health & Science University, led the curriculum reviews. This project focused on evaluating pre-licensure BSN nursing program curricula and was intended to discover how several educational institutions in the state were addressing pain competencies. The pain curricula included in the programs were benchmarked against the International [Association for the Study of Pain \(IASP\) Guidelines](#)¹. The IASP Guidelines recommend focus *areas in the following four thematic areas*:

- Multidimensional Nature of Pain
- Pain Assessment and Measurement
- Management of Pain
- Clinical Conditions

In addition to the IASP criteria, other topics were included for evaluative purposes to aid in assessing cross program similarities. Examples of the other evaluation areas include: acute versus chronic pain, mixed pain states, and central sensitization.

¹ <https://www.iasp-pain.org/Education/Curricula> (accessed June 25, 2019)

Key findings

One of the primary discoveries of this project is that it is difficult to compare content from the various nursing programs across the different schools. This is due to the ways in which courses and program curricula are created within the administrative departments of the school programs.

Of the 27 focus areas recommended for inclusion by IASP in a pain curriculum, Dr. Jones and her team found that 20 were represented by a single course in several of the institutions they reviewed. This finding is of concern because there is a risk of these focus areas falling out of nursing curriculum completely if the one class they are being offered in were to be discontinued by the institution or dropped by a student.

The commission has also discussed the following ongoing challenges with respect to conducting curriculum reviews:

- Dr. Jones and her team spent over 150 hours collectively to complete their study. Given that commission members are all volunteers, the time commitment required to conduct a thorough review of each institution far exceeds the number of hours members agreed to as a part of their service to the OPMC.
- The variability in how each institution's curriculum is developed and decided upon creates significant challenges when making comparisons.
- OPMC does not have any authority over any of the institutions it reviews.

Other planned activities for the next biennium

In addition to the continued review of pain curriculum, additional key points of focus and activities for the Oregon Pain Management Commission projected for the next biennial will focus on the following:

- Updates to the OPMC web-based pain education module for professionals. This will include addition of the new professional resources (PDF's & Videos), recently added to the OPMC website, into the existing online pain continuing education module.
- Addition to the OPMC website of a web-based pain education module for patients. This pain education module will be a mobile application, that contains content congruent with the professional module, but is more accessible for the pain patients and their caregivers.
- Review the Dept. of Health & Human Services Report on Pain Management Best Practices once completed and make recommendations that are specific to reducing the burden of pain for Oregonians.

This report may be obtained in an electronic version at the OPMC website:

<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HPA/dsi-pmc/Pages/reports.aspx>