

Handout for FMF on Decision-Making Capacity Assessment

As the life expectancy of Canadians and prevalence of complex chronic health conditions continues to rise, assessment of independent decision making capacity emerges as an issue of increasing importance. Toward this end, the Decision Making Capacity Assessment (DMCA) Model was developed to facilitate a process by which the least restrictive and intrusive means of support can be determined and offered to persons whose decision making has come into question.

Many physicians do not feel prepared to assess capacity from their residency training. Physicians play a key role in capacity assessment as they are able to declare persons incapable. They thus often require additional training once in practice.

An educational workshop has been developed on the DMCA process. This was based on an initial Capacity Assessment Professional Opinion Survey by Covenant Health (formerly Caritas) in Edmonton which identified this as an area that required interdisciplinary staff training in 2006. There were increased costs of poorly conducted capacity assessments. The study identified a lack of knowledge, skill set, standardised method/tools/guidelines, coordination and role definition plus the issue of resource allocation. A process was proposed with front-end screening/problem-solving, a well-defined standardised assessment, and definition of team members roles. A care map was developed based on this process. Documentation was developed consisting of a capacity assessment database and patient interview for formal capacity assessment. Interactive workshops, administered to familiarize staff with the model, include concepts of capacity, the protocol, documents, and case studies. A feasibility study looking at 3 acute care sites in Edmonton confirmed that this process addressed the issues of lack of knowledge, skill set etc. This 3 hour workshop is now being offered to physicians given their pivotal role in capacity assessment. This program meets the accreditation criteria of the College of Family Physicians of Canada and has been accredited for up to 3 Mainpro-C credits and 0 Mainpro-M1 credits. It has also been approved by the RCPSC for 3 MOC credits. The Office of the Public Guardian (OPG), in Alberta, has developed a 3-day workshop to train designated capacity assessors in the province, RN, RPN, SW, OT. We have developed a 2-day workshop, in partnership with the OPG, which will include the 3 hour DMCA process, for physicians. In addition to the mainpro C credits this program has been accredited by the College of Family Physicians of Canada and the Alberta Chapter for up to 7.75 Mainpro-M1 credits. It has also been approved by the RCPSC for 11.5 MOC credits.