

## Chronic Pain<sup>1</sup> Management Algorithm

### Phase One: Pain Assessment with a Biopsychosocial Perspective

#### Biological Factors

- Pain generator
- Precise diagnosis
- Age
- Injury / past injury
- Illnesses
- Neurological factors
- Genetics / family history
- Hormones
- Obesity

#### Psychological Factors

- Behavioral health
- Mood / affect
- Stress
- Coping style & tools
- Trauma history
- Childhood factors
- Substance use

#### Social Factors

- Cultural
- Economic
- Social supports
- Spirituality
- Ethnicity
- Education
- Stigma

#### Pain Assessment

- BPI – Brief Pain Inventory
- Physical
- Neurological
- Spine / musculoskeletal
- Functional Assessment**
- Daily activities
- Work
- Exercise

### Phase Two: Plan of Care with Universal and Specific Recommendations

#### Identify Functional Goals

- Work
- Exercise
- Daily activities
- Family interaction

#### Initial Treatment Options

- Non-pharmacologic (physical therapy, behavioral therapy, sleep)
- Intervention (correctible causes, surgical)
- Pharmacologic (NSAIDs, etc.), considering previous therapeutic classes tried and failed (ineffective, side effects, etc.) to guide treatment

#### Self-Management / Education

- Shared decision making
- Patient education
- Exercise, yoga, Tai Chi
- Mindfulness exercises

#### Neuropathic Conditions

- Neuropathies (diabetes, Njh post herpetic, trigeminal)
- Nerve root compression
- Sciatica

#### Treatment Options

- Injections (epidural, facet)
- Surgery
- Neuropathic pharmacologic agents
- Topical agents

#### Musculoskeletal / Mechanical Conditions

- Osteoarthritis
- Myofascial
- Degenerative disk disease
- Other neck/back pain
- Injuries

#### Treatment Options

- Acupuncture
- Chiropractic
- Massage
- Trigger point injections
- Topical agents
- NSAIDs
- Acetaminophen

#### Inflammatory Conditions

- Inflammatory arthropathy (rheumatoid arthritis)

#### Treatment Options

- Heat & cold
- Joint injections
- NSAIDs
- Corticosteroids
- Acetaminophen
- Topical Agents
- Immune modulating agents

#### Multiple Etiologies

- Headache
- Central pain syndromes (post-stroke, complex regional pain syndrome)
- Fibromyalgia
- Behavioral

#### Treatment Options

- Address insomnia
- Exercise
- Physical therapy
- Cognitive behavioral therapy
- Mindfulness

### Phase Three: Periodic Evaluations

#### Pain Goals Met

- Continue current Plan of Care
- Periodically re-evaluate needs and adjust Plan of Care

#### Pain Goals Not Met

- Reassess
- Adjust Plan of Care, e.g., to include opioid trial
- Refer to pain specialist

<sup>1</sup> International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) definition of chronic pain: Pain that persists past normal healing time and hence lacks the acute warning function of physiological nociception. Usually, pain is regarded as chronic when it lasts or recurs for more than three to six months.