

# CRITICAL Incident Learning

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

### RANGE DOSE ORDERS

#### How should nurses handle prescriber orders that give range doses?

ISMP Canada has identified interpretation of range doses as an area of concern and in dialoguing with frontline providers we have found that there are differing viewpoints.

For example: Morphine 5-10 mg q4h PRN

#### Interpretation 1:

1<sup>st</sup> dose – 0800h – 5 mg

2<sup>nd</sup> dose – 1200h – 7.5 mg

3<sup>rd</sup> dose – 1600h – 10 mg

#### Interpretation 2:

1<sup>st</sup> dose – 0800h – 5 mg

2<sup>nd</sup> dose – 1000h – 5 mg

3<sup>rd</sup> dose – 1400h – 5 mg or 7.5 mg or 10 mg

Or 5 mg q2h prn

#### Recommendation:

ISMP Canada believes that organizations need to define their approach to range doses in policy so that everyone knows what the expectations are and then prescribers can order accordingly. For example, require prescribers to specify the duration between incremental doses (e.g., 5 mg q1h prn to a max of 10 mg in a 4 hour period).

#### Reference:

Medication guidelines. College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta. 2015 Mar. Available from: [http://www.nurses.ab.ca/content/dam/carna/pdfs/DocumentList/Guidelines/MedicationGuidelines\\_Mar2015.pdf](http://www.nurses.ab.ca/content/dam/carna/pdfs/DocumentList/Guidelines/MedicationGuidelines_Mar2015.pdf)