



# Safer Practice Notice

## Status

- Active
- Updated
- Resolved

## Zone Application

- Provincial
- North
- Edmonton
- Central
- Calgary
- South

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## For Action By:

- Physicians
- Nurse Practitioners
- Nurses
- Clinical Educators
- Clinical Engineering
- Managers

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## Potential for patient harm when silencing pulse oximetry alarms or tones during procedures requiring sedation

### Issue

- Instances of pulse oximetry audible alarms and heart rate tones being turned down or silenced have led to delays in recognizing and responding to patients with compromised cardiovascular, respiratory and neurological reserves.
- Flashing visual indicators on pulse oximetry devices do not provide adequate queues to detect compromised patients.
- Medications used in procedural sedation may result in profound unexpected, abrupt apnea and cardiac decompensation.

**DO NOT SILENCE ALARMS**



### Action

1. To ensure timely reaction to changes in patient status:
  - do not rely solely on visual pulse oximetry indicators
  - do not silence the heart rate tones or audible alarms on pulse oximetry devices
2. Visit the Health Professions Strategy & Practice (HPSP) Resource page on Insite for information on Procedural Sedation:
  - AHS Policy
  - AHS Resources
  - Education available through My Learning Link
3. Consult with your local Clinical Educator and Clinical Engineering Department to discuss the best configuration of auditory and visual alarms for your procedure room and to ensure an audible heart rate tone is set.

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<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/patientsafety>