

GENERAL INFORMATION

What is Continuing Medical Education (CME)?

CME is defined by the American Medical Association (AMA) and the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) as educational activities that serve to maintain, develop, or increase the knowledge, skills, and professional performance and relationships a physician uses to provide services for patients, the public, or the profession. CME represents that body of knowledge and skills generally recognized and accepted by the profession as within the basic medical sciences, the discipline of clinical medicine, and the provision of health care to the public. Recently, the ACCME replaced the term “continuing medical education” with “accredited continuing education” to be inclusive of all health professions. Accredited was included to explicitly differentiate between accredited and nonaccredited education providers and education.

The AMA established the Physician’s Recognition Award (PRA) certificate and the related AMA PRA credit system to recognize physicians who participate in continuing medical education activities as a means of staying current with advances in the medical profession and authorizes organizations like the ACCME to accredit providers that provide these educational opportunities for physicians.

AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ is issued by an accredited provider to physicians who participate in their certified activities and choose to claim credit. Accredited CME providers represent a range of organizations from national physician membership organizations to rural hospitals. ACCME’s accreditation rules ensure that accredited CME is designed to be relevant, practice-based, effective, and independent of commercial influence.

Why do I need CME?

Aside from the direct educational value of continued learning, *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™* is the most common type of credit physicians need for medical license maintenance. In addition, many managed care companies, hospitals and medical centers around the country require documentation of CME credit for appointments and promotions.

CME Credit

CME Credit is the “currency” assigned to CME activities. Physicians and other healthcare professionals use credits to meet requirements for maintenance of licensure, maintenance of specialty board certification, credentialing, membership in professional societies, and other professional privileges. The requirements for credit designation are determined by the organization responsible for the credit system – in our case, that is the ACCME in alignment with the AMA.

The Texas Medical Board requirements are that physicians need to complete at least 48 credits of continuing medical education every 24 months (24 month timeline is in relation to the biennial registration period, not the calendar year). At least half of these hours must be in formal, category 1 or 1A courses. A physician must report during license registration if she or he has completed the required CME.

The board additionally requires that at least 2 of the 24 formal hours must involve the study of medical ethics and/or professional responsibility; 2 formal hours in the study of best practices, alternative treatments and multi-modal approaches to pain management as well as safe and effective pain management related to the prescription of opioids and other controlled substances; and effective September 2020, an HHS approved course in human trafficking prevention.

What is relationship between Maintenance of Certification (MOC) and CME?

The ACCME has collaborated with some of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) certifying boards to better meet the needs of physicians and educators by increasing the availability of accredited CME activities that meet the requirements for MOC. Contact the Office of CME for a current list of approved collaborations.