

General Continuing Education Requirements for Medical Doctors

By Board Rule, all licensees are required to complete forty (40) hours of continuing medical education courses during the two (2) calendar years (January 1 – December 31) preceding their licensure renewal year. All licensees (unless exempt under TENN. CODE ANN. § 63-1-402(c)) shall complete a minimum of two (2) of the forty (40) required hours of continuing education in controlled substance prescribing, which must include instruction in the Department's Chronic Pain Guidelines on opioids, benzodiazepines, barbiturates and carisoprodol and may include topics such as medicine addiction, risk management tools and other topics approved by the Board.

This rule change follows the enactment of TENN. CODE ANN. § 63-1-402 which requires that all prescribers who hold a current federal drug enforcement administration (DEA) license and who prescribe controlled substances shall be required to complete a minimum of two (2) hours of continuing education related to controlled substance prescribing to include instruction in the Department's Chronic Pain Guidelines. The statute's effective date was July 1, 2014.

The result of these changes is as follows:

Prescriber licensees with a DEA registration who are renewing in 2015 and all subsequent years must complete two (2) hours of controlled substance prescribing to include instruction in the Department's Chronic Pain Guidelines. These credits should be earned by December 31, 2014.

Licensees who do not prescribe and do not have a DEA registration who are renewing in 2015, must complete one hour of continuing education in prescribing practices by December 31, 2014. These licensees will have to complete the two hours of controlled substance prescribing CME as a condition of their 2017 and all subsequent renewals (unless they are exempt under TENN. CODE ANN. § 63-1-402(c)).

All licensees of the Board of Medical Examiners who are renewing in 2016 or subsequent years, must complete two hours of controlled substances prescribing CME which must include instruction in the Department's Chronic Pain Guidelines, unless the licensee is exempt under TENN. CODE ANN. § 63-1-402(c).

The following licensees are exempt under TENN. CODE ANN. § 63-1-402(c):

- Veterinarians;
- Providers practicing at a registered pain management clinic as defined in TENN. CODE ANN. § 63-1-301; and
- Medical doctors and osteopathic physicians who are board certified by the ABMS, AOA, ABPS in one or more of the following specialties or subspecialties:
 - Pain management;
 - Anesthesiology;
 - Physical medicine and rehabilitation;
 - Neurology; or
 - Rheumatology.

Failure to comply with continuing education requirements may result in disciplinary action against the licensee or registrant. The disciplinary action will be reported on the Department of Health license verification web site.

By signing the renewal application form, licensees affirm that they have met this requirement. The Department of Health audits licensees to determine and confirm compliance.