

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS FOR MEDICAL DOCTORS

Q: How many total hours of continuing medical education am I required to complete each year?

A: All medical doctors must complete forty (40) hours in the two calendar years preceding the year of license renewal. Unless exempted by statute, two (2) of the forty (40) required hours must relate to controlled substance prescribing, which must include instruction in the Department's treatment guidelines on opioids, benzodiazepines, barbiturates and carisoprodol and may include instruction on topics such as medicine addiction, risk management tools and other topics approved by the Board.

Example: If your medical license is renewed in October of 2016, forty hours of CME must be completed between January 1, 2014 and December 31, 2015.

You may complete all or none of your required hours in a single year within your two year CME cycle, so long as forty total hours are completed within the appropriate two year timeframe.

Q: Who is statutorily exempted from the two (2) hour controlled substance prescribing CME?

A: Medical doctors and osteopathic physicians who are board certified by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), American Osteopathic Association (AOA) or the American Board of Physician Specialties in one (1) or more of the following specialties or subspecialties do not have to complete the two (2) hour controlled substance prescribing course(s):

- i. Pain management;
- ii. Anesthesiology;
- iii. Physical medicine and rehabilitation;
- iv. Neurology; or
- v. Rheumatology.

Q: How do I know whether a particular course is acceptable to the Board?

A: In order to be accepted by the Board, a course must be sponsored by an organization accredited as a sponsor of continuing medical education by either the Accrediting Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) or by a state medical association recognized by the ACCME as an intrastate accreditor of sponsors of continuing medical education, and the course must either award AMA Category 1 credits or be designated by the AAFP as meeting the criteria of the AAFP's prescribed credit.

Q: How do I know whether my controlled substance prescribing CME will be accepted by the Board?

A: Because the Board does not endorse any particular CME course and thus does not publish available courses to the Board website, Board staff is unable to "approve" CME in advance of a provider's

completion. However, as long as the CME course or courses total two (2) hours, awards AMA or AAFP credits and include instruction in the Tennessee Department of Health's treatment guidelines on opioids, benzodiazepines, barbiturates and carisoprodol, the course will be accepted. The course must be Tennessee-specific. ***We cannot accept another state's prescribing course, the course must specify on its face that it includes Tennessee-specific content.***

Q: What if I fail to complete all forty (40) required CME hours in the two calendar years preceding my license renewal?

A: The Board of Medical Examiners has adopted a policy to address a licensee's failure to obtain the requisite number of CME hours. That policy (available here: http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/health/attachments/ME_CE_Policy_1011.pdf) imposes the following penalties on the provider:

- i. The physician must pay a civil penalty in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100) for each hour of Category I CME that he or she is deficient;
- ii. The physician must make up the amount of CME hours that he or she is deficient, in addition to completing the hours required for the current year; and
- iii. The physician must complete ten penalty hours which must be completed in addition to making up the physician's deficient hours as well as any hours due during the current renewal timeframe.

These penalties will be imposed through an Agreed Citation, which will be posted to the Board's monthly disciplinary action report and linked to the physician's verification page. A physician's failure to comply with the policy may result in further disciplinary action.

Q: I am meeting the requirements of MOC for an ABMS Board. Do I get CME credit for satisfactorily participating in this program?

A: Yes, you may elect to have your satisfactory proof of participation in a qualifying MOC program serve as proof of completion of the CME requirements of your profession. If you are audited, you will be asked to specify whether you are participating in MOC. If you check "Yes", you should identify your certifying board(s) on the next line of the audit form. Administrative staff will independently verify your MOC status and if you are found to be satisfactorily participating in MOC, you will be deemed compliant with all requirements of your CME with the exception of the required Tennessee-specific controlled substance prescribing medical education.

Q: I would like to request a waiver of my CME hours. What criteria must I meet in order for a waiver to be considered?

A: The Board may waive a physician's CME requirements for a two year renewal timeframe in cases where illness, disability or other undue hardship beyond the control of the licensee prevents a licensee from complying. ***Requests for waivers must be sent to the Board prior to the expiration of the calendar year in which the CME is due.***

Q: How long must I retain proof of completion of my CME?

A: All licensees must retain independent documentation of completion of all CME hours for a period of four (4) years from the end of the calendar year in which the CME was completed. Proper documentation may consist of any one of the following:

- i. Original certificates or photocopies of original certificates from course providers verifying the licensee's attendance and/or completion of hours;
- ii. Original letters or photocopies of original letters from course providers verifying the licensee's attendance and/or completion of hours;
- iii. Documentation from the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) indicating acquired CME hours.

Q: My license is retired. Do I have to complete CME?

A: No, you do not have to complete CME if your license is retired; however, should you later choose to reinstate your license and reenter clinical practice, the Board may consider whether you have completed CME as part of its deliberations concerning your readiness to reenter practice.

Q: I have a full and unrestricted medical license in Tennessee; however, I am still in a residency or fellowship training program. Do I have to complete CME?

A: Licensees enrolled in good standing in ACGME-approved residency or fellowship training program can receive up to twenty (20) hours of Tennessee continuing education credit for each year of enrollment. To receive credit for your education, you must submit a letter from the director of your program which confirms your good standing, your date(s) of participation and that the program is ACGME-approved. You are still required to obtain two (2) of Tennessee-specific controlled substance prescribing education. For more information, consult the Board's "[Policy Regarding Continuing Education Programs for Those in Training Programs.](#)"

Q: My license is inactive. Do I have to complete CME?

A: No, you do not have to complete CME if your license is inactive; however, should you later choose to reinstate your license and reenter clinical practice, the Board may consider whether you have completed CME as part of its deliberations concerning your readiness to reenter practice.