

‘FAQs’ about new CMEs for chronic pain, end of life care

The following are the Iowa Board of Medicine’s answers to frequently asked questions about new administrative rules requiring Iowa-licensed physicians to complete continuing medical education for chronic pain management and end of life care. If you need more information about the CME requirements, please call the Board, (515) 242-6039, or send e-mail to ibm@iowa.gov

Q. What are the new CME requirements?

A. Effective August 17, 2011, Iowa-licensed physicians who provide primary care must complete two hours of Category 1 training for chronic pain management and two hours of Category 1 training for end-of-life care every five years. (See 653 Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 11.4)

Q. When must this training be completed?

A. Physicians who had permanent Iowa licenses on August 17, 2011, have until August 17, 2016, to complete the training, and then once every five years thereafter. The Board is hopeful physicians will pursue this CME activity as soon as possible. If a physician’s CME documentation is audited for cause or randomly after August 17, 2016, and there is no evidence they received the required CME prior to August 17, 2016, the physician would be in non-compliance with the administrative rule. Physicians who receive an Iowa medical license after August 17, 2011, must complete the training within five years of the date of issuance, and then once every five years thereafter.

Q. Who must complete this mandatory training?

A. The new rules place emphasis on the patient’s primary care provider (PCP), but they take it one step further by acknowledging that these PCPs include “emergency physicians, family physicians, general practice physicians, internists, neurologists, pain medicine specialists, psychiatrists and any other physician who regularly provides primary health care to patients.” (Iowa Administrative Code 653 Chapter 11.4).

Q. Are any Iowa-licensed physicians exempt?

A. Physicians whose practice is not considered to be primary care are not required to complete the requirements. If you are uncertain if the rules are applicable to your license, please ask the Board.

Q. I have not yet but will be renewing my license prior to August 17, 2013, and have completed 2 hours of Category 1 CME in end of life care and chronic pain management during my current licensing cycle. Do I need to take 2 additional Category 1 CME hours in each prior to relicensing prior to August 17, 2013?

A. No.

Q. I am an internal medicine subspecialist (e.g. cardiologist, rheumatologist, gastroenterologist) who does not provide primary care services to any of my patients. Do I need to meet these requirements?

A. No.

Q. I am an internal medicine subspecialist (e.g. oncologist, nephrologist, pulmonologist) who does provide primary care services to some of my patients. Do I need to meet these requirements?

A. Yes.

Q. Do the new requirements increase the number of CMEs required for license renewal?

A. No. The new chronic pain management and end-of-life care CME credits can be applied toward the continuing medical education requirements (40 CMEs every two year).

Q. How are the new requirements applied to applicants for permanent licensure?

A. They do not apply. They only apply at renewal.

Q. Are the requirements applied to applicants for residency licensure?

A. No, because they do not renew their licenses.

Q. How does the licensee disclose completion of the mandatory training?

A. They will answer a question on the renewal application that asks if they have taken the training.

Q. How does the Board determine compliance with the new CME requirements?

A. The Board randomly audits compliance. If audited, a licensee would need to submit proof that they completed the training within the guidelines of the new rules.

Q. Is the Board recommending specific courses for the new CME requirements?

A. No. However, the Board is recognizing the book, "Responsible Opioid Prescribing: A Physician's Guide," as one source for the CME for chronic pain management. This book has an online course that will qualify for 7.25 AMA PRA Category 1 credits. The book is available free of charge from the Board. The online course costs \$30. This book and online course would not be recognized for end-of-life care training. The Board will work with any program that meets CME standards. There is nothing to keep a local CME provider from developing its own program, so long as it meets standards for Category 1 CME.