



OPEN LETTER

To: Whom It May Concern

From: R. Shawn Martin Executive Vice President/CEO

Re: Educational Grants for Approved CME Providers

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) is aware that many industry online grant application systems do not provide a mechanism to distinguish between the continuing medical education (CME) provider and the type of credit for a CME activity. This is problematic in the case of the AAFP, which awards credit to many CME activities for CME provider organizations, including AAFP constituent chapters.

An interpretation of CME oversight that considers only the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) accreditation system does a disservice to all parties involved. It is the CME credit systems of the AAFP, the American Medical Association (AMA), and the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) that award credit to activities and, of these, only the AAFP reviews the details of each individual CME activity. By expanding your consideration to CME providers that secure credit from the AAFP you will:

- Ensure that deserving CME providers have the benefit of your support to produce legitimate educational activities for physicians,
- Allow many family physicians, and other primary care professionals, access to important educational opportunities,
- Gain access to large professional communities of family and osteopathic physicians who do not participate in many of the CME activities offered by ACCME-accredited providers.

Importantly, the CME credit systems require all parties to adhere to the ACCME Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education.

The AAFP recommends that your company issue grants in a broader manner supported by the explanations of the four U.S. institutions listed below that have oversight of CME. The organizations, presented in order of their dates of origin, include:

1. The AAFP has certified individual CME activities since 1948.

AAFP CME credit focuses on a review of CME at the activity level. The AAFP Credit System review ensures the relevance of content to a family physician audience and validates an activity's scientific integrity and soundness.

2. The AMA established its Physician Recognition Award (PRA) Category 1™ Credit in 1968.

The AMA PRA Credit System defines the standards and policies for the PRA. Within the United States, only organizations accredited by either the ACCME or a recognized state medical society may certify activities for *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™*.

3.The AOA has accredited CME providers and individual CME activities since 1973.

The AOA has its own system and standards for designating AOA CME credit. The AOA Board of Trustees establishes the AOA's credit system policies and procedures which are monitored by the AOA Council on Continuing Medical Education.

4.The ACCME has accredited CME providers since 1981.

The ACCME accredits organizations directly and recognizes state medical societies which in turn accredit organizations within their state or region. Once accredited, these organizations are granted the privilege of designating *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™* to their CME activities.

Please note that while the AAFP has a recognized CME credit system, this does not imply that the AAFP endorses CME activities or that the AAFP is working in cooperation with, or in joint sponsorship, with CME providers. Therefore, it would be inappropriate and unreasonable for AAFP to accept educational grants issued by your companies on behalf of CME providers whose activities have been awarded AAFP CME credit.

The AAFP monitors the CME provider organizations that submit applications for CME credit to ensure they maintain compliance with the AAFP Credit System's eligibility criteria and to all major ethical and commercial support guidelines. This includes the ACCME Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education, which the AAFP formally adopted as part of its own policies. CME provider organizations must attest that they will comply fully with these ethical guidelines. To ensure compliance, the AAFP conducts random post-activity audits of approved activities.

The AAFP's process for content review and approval of CME activities comes under the purview of a physician member entity, the Commission on Continuing Professional Development (COCPD). Applications are reviewed by both the AAFP staff and, as needed, by volunteer physician reviewers who have been trained to assess the validity of content and its relevance to family physicians based on policies and procedures established by the COCPD.

Please let us know if you have any questions or if we can be of additional assistance. For more information, you may contact our Strategic Engagements department by email at strategicengagements@aaafp.org. We look forward to your response.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. Shawn Martin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

R. Shawn Martin
Executive Vice President/CEO