



# AAFP Continuing Medical Education Requirements for Members

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## PURPOSE AND DEFINITION OF CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION (CME)

CME is the cornerstone of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) and has been a requirement for continuing membership since the founding of this organization in 1948. CME for the family physician is emphasized because the responsibility for providing comprehensive and continuing health care to patients carries with it the responsibility to continue learning. The need to keep abreast of the rapid expansion of medical knowledge necessitates CME. CME is that process within the scope of family medicine that provides information and activities designed to maintain and improve the ability of the family physician to provide high quality patient care. This education process encompasses all the areas usually encountered by the family physician necessary to carry out these responsibilities.

## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Active members and family physicians eligible for Supporting membership must complete 150 credits of CME every three years, of which a minimum of 25 must be obtained from group learning activities and a *MINIMUM OF 75 MUST BE PRESCRIBED CREDIT*. An exemption of the 25 credits of group activity will be allowed for AAFP Active members or family physicians eligible for Supporting membership who submit evidence that they are providing medical care in a missionary/charitable practice setting in an overseas practice for more than a 12-month period.
2. Each AAFP constituent chapter shall have the option of requiring its members to obtain a portion of their CME credit from that chapter's produced or approved activities. In such case, no more than 25 credits may be required from these activities. It is the responsibility of each chapter to inform the CME Accreditation Department which activities should be designated in the CME database as chapter approved.
3. It shall be the responsibility of each individual member to report CME credits to the CME Records Department. Members may submit the CME reporting form by mail to the CME Records Department, 11400 Tomahawk Creek Parkway, Leawood, Kansas 66211-2672, by fax at 913-906-6269, by calling 1-800-274-8043, or online at <https://secure.aafp.org/login/>.

## PRESCRIBED AND ELECTIVE CREDIT SOURCES REQUIRING COCPD REVIEW

AAFP members should inform providers of CME activities, e.g., hospitals, medical schools, and other organizations, of AAFP's CME requirements. If such organizations wish to have their activities reviewed for approval by AAFP, they must follow the criteria, definitions, and rules of AAFP. Providers can obtain CME accreditation information online at [www.aafp.org/cmea](http://www.aafp.org/cmea).

A CME activity may be approved for Prescribed credit if the activity is intended primarily for physicians, has content directly related to patient care or its delivery or related to selected non-clinical topics, and has been planned and developed with input from an AAFP Active or Life Member.

A CME activity may be approved for Elective credit if the activity has content of interest to physicians, is not necessarily directly related to patient care or its delivery but will improve a physician's professional ability. AAFP member input is not required for Elective credit.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	CREDIT DESIGNATION		
	Prescribed	Elective	No Credit
Live activities reviewed and approved for AAFP credit <sup>1</sup>	X	X	
Enduring materials reviewed and approved for AAFP credit <sup>2</sup>	X	X	
Medical journals reviewed and approved for AAFP credit <sup>3</sup>	X	X	
Postgraduate training programs approved for AAFP credit <sup>4</sup>	X	X	
Performance Improvement <sup>5</sup>	X		
Point of Care activities <sup>6</sup>	X		
Teaching <sup>7,8</sup>	X		
Activities approved by the College of Family Physicians of Canada for MAINPRO-M1 or MAINPRO-C credits <sup>9</sup>	X		

<sup>1</sup> Live activities for which an application has been submitted to the Commission on Continuing Professional Development (COCPD) and approved for Prescribed and/or Elective credit. "Application for Approval of Live Activities for CME Credit" may be obtained from the CME Accreditation Department or online at [www.aafp.org/cmea](http://www.aafp.org/cmea). Credit allowed upon completion of each activity as designated by AAFP.

<sup>2</sup> Enduring Materials (defined as independent learning materials designed primarily as self-study CME activities) for which an application has been submitted to the COCPD and approved for Prescribed and/or Elective credit. "Application for Approval of Enduring Materials for CME Credit" may be obtained from the CME Accreditation Department or online at [www.aafp.org/cmea](http://www.aafp.org/cmea). Credit allowed upon completion of each activity as designated by AAFP.

<sup>3</sup> Journals (defined as regularly published collections of articles intended for medical professionals to provide CME) for which an application has been submitted to the AAFP COCPD and approved for AAFP Prescribed and/or Elective credit. "Application for Approval of Medical Journals for CME Credit" may be obtained from the CME Accreditation Department or online at [www.aafp.org/cmea](http://www.aafp.org/cmea). Credit allowed upon completion of each journal as designated by AAFP.

<sup>4</sup> Mini-residency training or fellowship programs designed for practicing physicians for which an application has been submitted to the COCPD and approved for Prescribed and/or Elective credit. "Application for Approval of Live Activities for CME Credit" may be obtained from the CME Accreditation Department or online at [www.aafp.org/cmea](http://www.aafp.org/cmea). Limit of 50 credits per week with a maximum of 150 credits per year.

<sup>5</sup> Performance Improvement (PI) activities that are approved for AAFP CME credit. Five AAFP Prescribed credits can be awarded for the completion of each of the three Stages (A, B and C). Completion of the full PI cycle is not required. Physicians completing, in sequence, all three Stages (A-C) of a structured PI activity may receive an additional five AAFP Prescribed credits, for a maximum of twenty credits. This credit allocation acknowledges the best learning is associated with completing a well-conceived PI activity. Credit allowed upon completion of each activity as designated by AAFP.

<sup>6</sup> Formal Point of Care activities that are approved for AAFP CME credit. Maximum 0.5 credits per search with a limit of 20 credits per year.

<sup>7</sup> Teaching medical students, residents, physicians, physician assistant students, physician assistants, nurse practitioner students, nurse practitioners, nursing students, or nurses in formal individual (e.g. preceptorships) or group educational formats. Members may self report this credit. Limit of 20 credits per year.

<sup>8</sup> CME faculty who develop activities that receive the AAFP evidence-based CME (EB CME) designation for double credit may claim the amount of credit awarded to learners as teaching credit. Members may self report this credit. Limit of 20 credits per year.

<sup>9</sup> CME activities that have been accredited by the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) for MAINPRO-M1 or MAINPRO-C credits. See page 4 for activities that do not qualify. Members may self report this credit. Credit allowed upon completion of each activity as designated by CFPC.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	CREDIT DESIGNATION		
	Prescribed	Elective	No Credit
Scholarly work, including original published scientific/socioeconomic research, <sup>10</sup> participation in clinical research studies, <sup>11</sup> peer review of journal manuscripts, <sup>12</sup> and writing questions for tests/examinations <sup>13</sup>	X		
Advanced training <sup>14</sup>	X		
Scholarly work, including scientific paper presentations <sup>15</sup> and preparation/presentation of scientific exhibits <sup>16</sup>		X	
Activities approved for AMA PRA Category 1 credit <sup>17</sup>		X	
Activities approved for AOA credit <sup>18</sup>		X	

<sup>10</sup> Original scientific or socioeconomic research pertaining to patient care, public or community health, published in a state or national “refereed” journal. *Members may self report this credit. Limit of 15 credits per paper, with a maximum of 45 credits per three-year re-election cycle.*

<sup>11</sup> Participation in clinical research studies including case reports, case series, systematic reviews, and other descriptive and experimental studies. Participation may include: writing a grant to secure funding for a clinical research project; research work as an investigator or co-investigator; and authoring or co-authoring a manuscript. Participation in research studies conducted by pharmaceutical companies, device manufacturers, or other proprietary entities or in industry-sponsored drug trials does not qualify for AAFP credit. *Members may self report this credit. Limit of 10 credits per year.*

<sup>12</sup> Peer review of manuscripts for journals listed in *Medline*. *Members may self report this credit. Limit of 3 credits per manuscript, with a maximum of 15 credits per year.*

<sup>13</sup> Test item writing activities describe a learning process wherein physicians contribute to the development of high stakes examinations, or certain self-assessment modules, by researching, drafting and defending potential questions. The questions must be developed for examinations given by the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME), or a member board of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), or for peer-reviewed, published, self-assessment educational activities from a national medical specialty society. The process for this activity must document guidance for the physician question writers on how to use evidence for writing quality questions. The assignments must be at a depth and scope that require a review of the literature and knowledge of the evidence base for the questions. Physician question writers should document their review of evidence-based literature. The physician question writers must personally participate in a group peer review of the questions. The question writers should revise their questions, when necessary, based on feedback from the peer group. *Members may self report this credit. Limit of 10 credits per year.*

<sup>14</sup> Completion of a medically-related master’s degree or a fellowship/mini-fellowship program beyond family medicine residency training. *Members may self-report this credit. Limit of 25 credits per three-year re-election cycle.*

<sup>15</sup> Presentation or publication at AAFP, AAFP constituent chapter, or other medical society level of an original scientific or socioeconomic paper pertaining to medical care. *Members may self report this credit. Limit of 10 credits per paper, with a maximum of 30 credits per three-year re-election cycle.*

<sup>16</sup> Preparation and presentation of a scientific medical exhibit at a meeting produced by AAFP or an AAFP constituent chapter. *Members may self report this credit. Limit of 15 credits per three-year re-election cycle.*

<sup>17</sup> Educational activities produced by an organization or institution accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) or by an authorized state medical society to provide CME for physicians that have been designated as Category 1 Credit™ for the AMA Physician’s Recognition Award and that have not been reviewed for AAFP Prescribed credit eligibility. *Members may self report this credit as AMA Category 1 Credit™.*

<sup>18</sup> Educational activities that have been approved for credit by the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and that have not been reviewed for AAFP Prescribed credit eligibility. *Members may self report this credit as AOA credit.*

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	CREDIT DESIGNATION		
	Prescribed	Elective	No Credit
Professional enrichment activities <sup>19</sup>		X	
Taking a board examination <sup>20</sup>		X	
Medical writing <sup>21</sup>		X	
Activities that are part of a physician's professional responsibility <sup>22</sup>			X
Activities with a primary purpose of enrichment for the physician, e.g., life balance, personal management, retirement planning, estate planning, insurance, or taxes			X
Activities that teach or promote therapies that are determined by the COCPD to be dangerous or proven ineffective			X
Enduring materials for which the term of approval has expired			X
Activities produced by proprietary entities such as pharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers, etc., or their agents			X

<sup>19</sup> Other medical educational experiences and activities, such as taking independent exam preparation and informal self-learning activities. These activities may or may not be documented, are not AAFP-approved or produced by an ACCME accredited institution or organization, but are of a nature of personal enrichment to the family physician. *Members may self report this credit. Limit of 25 credits per three-year re-election cycle.*

<sup>20</sup> Credit may be claimed for ABFM certification, recertification, and maintenance of certification. *Members may self report this credit. Limit of 25 credits per three-year re-election cycle.*

<sup>21</sup> Medical writing targeted to a physician and/or other health professional audience. *Members may self report this credit. Limit of 30 credits per 3-year re-election cycle.*

<sup>22</sup> Activities which may be educational but which are considered part of a physician's professional responsibility such as time spent in individual quality assurance and peer review activities, community/public educational activities, domestic and international voluntary service, and patient record review when it is not part of a formal quality improvement CME activity.