

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS CREDIT SYSTEM

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) established the nation's first Continuing Medical Education (CME) credit system in 1948, as a way of assuring the appropriateness and quality of educational products or programs for Family Physicians to engage in lifelong learning. That same year, the AAFP began requiring, as a condition of membership election or re-election, that Family Physicians report at least 150 CME hours per each three-year re-election cycle. This was a way to encourage practicing physicians to keep up with medical advances and continue to improve care to their patients – both a professional responsibility and an ethical imperative, later affirmed in the American Medical Association's Code of Ethics.

The AAFP CME Credit system was developed to describe continuing medical education (CME) activities that met defined standards necessary to count toward meeting the re-election CME requirement. Over the years the system has evolved significantly under the direction of the AAFP Commission on Continuing Professional Development (COCPD). The day-to-day responsibility for educating stakeholders, consumers of credit, CME providers, AAFP member learners and other health care professionals, and overseeing compliance is managed by the AAFP Division of Continuing Medical Education.

The evolution of the AAFP CME Credit system has undergone many changes, including the change in the metric from "hours" to "credits," and now includes two Categories:

AAFP Prescribed Credit

- Prescribed credit is awarded to CME activities designed primarily for physicians. The content must relate directly to patient care, patient care delivery or certain non-clinical topics. A family physician who is an Active, Supporting, or Life AAFP member must be directly involved in the planning of the activity to ensure relevance to the specialty of Family Medicine.

AAFP Elective Credit

- Elective credit is obtainable for activities that are designed primarily for other health professionals but include content that is of interest to physicians and will improve a physician's professional ability. This content need not directly influence patient care or its delivery. These activities do not require AAFP member input.

To be eligible for AAFP Prescribed or Elective CME credit, an activity must comply fully with the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) Standards for Commercial Support and the American Medical Association (AMA) Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs (CEJA) Gifts to Physicians from Industry Opinion E-8.061.

CME provider organizations may submit application for certification of a CME activity online at www.AAFP.org.

Equivalency Agreements

The AAFP has equivalency agreements with the American Medical Association (AMA), the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), and the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC):

- AAFP Prescribed credit is accepted by the American Medical Association as equivalent to AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ toward the AMA Physician's Recognition Award.
- The AAFP accepts AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ as elective credit.
- The AOA will accept AAFP Prescribed and Elective credit as Category 2 credit. (2-A for formal, live activities that deal with clinical topics; 2-B for informal or non-live activities, or activities that deal with non-clinical topics such as malpractice.)
- The AAFP and the CFPC have a bilateral reciprocal accreditation agreement.
- AAFP Prescribed credit is accepted by state medical boards for re-licensure.

