

## **CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION INFORMATION**

The Physician Assistant Board regulations (Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations Section 1399.615 et seq.) mandated by Business and Professions Code Section 3524.5 require a physician assistant to complete continuing medical education as a condition of license renewal.

The requirement may be met by either one of the methods listed below:

Completing 50 hours of Category 1 (preapproved) medical education every two years immediately preceding the expiration date of your license;

### **OR**

Being certified by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) at the time of renewal.

A physician assistant who renews his or her license on or after January 2013 will be required to certify his or her compliance with the new continuing medical education regulations.

Please review and become familiar with the Continuing Medical Education regulation, as explained below.

For further information on the requirement, please call the Physician Assistant Board at (916) 561-8780.

## **CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION AUDIT INFORMATION**

The process for the audit is to select, at random, physician assistants who have certified compliance by signing the CME statement on their renewal notice. If selected, you are required to provide documentation to the board regarding your compliance of the CME requirements listed above.

The documentation requested as part of the audit is mandatory. Please note that failing to provide the requested information to the board is unprofessional conduct for which you may be cited, and

Your license status may be changed to inactive until you provide proof of CME compliance to the board. If this happens, you would not be able to engage in an activity for which a license is required.

You will be required to make up the deficient CME hours during your next renewal period.

Your next license renewal application will not be approved by the board until proof of CME compliance is received.

Please note: CME audit letters will be mailed to the current address of record. Use this link [Breeze](#) to verify your address of record. Use this link [Address Changes](#) for information on how to change your address of record.

## **APPROVED CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION**

Continuing medical education is required for all physician assistants.

Physician assistants may demonstrate their compliance by verifying either:

1) Completion of 50 hours of approved Category 1 (preapproved) medical education. The CME must have been obtained from providers that are designed Category 1 (preapproved by one of the following sponsors:

American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA).

American Medical Association (AMA).

American Osteopathic Association Council on Continuing Medical Education (AOACCME).

American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP).

Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME).

A state medical society recognized by the ACCME.

Or,

2) Certification by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA)

Continuing medical education obtained from a program other than those specified above does not satisfy the continuing medical education requirements.

## **REPORTING CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION COMPLIANCE**

On and after January 2013, each physician assistant will be required to certify on the renewal notice his or her compliance with the continuing medical education requirements.

## **DOCUMENTATION OF CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION**

A physician assistant must retain, for a period of four years after the acquisition of the necessary continuing medical education, records issued by an approved continuing medical education provider that indicate the title of the course or program attended, the dates of attendance, and the hours assigned to the course or program.

If a physician assistant is certified by the NCCPA at the time of license renewal, evidence of certification must be retained for four (4) years after such certification is issued.

## **CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION WAIVERS**

A physician assistant who is unable to complete the minimum continuing medical education requirements due to reasons of health, military service, or undue hardship may request a waiver of continuing medical education requirement. A physician assistant who submits an application for a continuing medical education waiver that is denied by the Physician Assistant Board shall be ineligible for active renewal of his or her license unless the licensee complies with the continuing medical education requirements of Section 1399.615. A physician assistant who does not have an approved CME waiver at the time of renewal must comply with CME requirements or may renew the license in an inactive status.

To request a continuing medical education waiver please complete an [Application for Medical Education Waiver form](#) and submit to the Board. For a practicing licensee, the Board recommends submitting any request for a waiver approximately 6 months before the expiration of the license.

## **INACTIVE STATUS**

California Code of Regulations Section 1399.619 permits a licensee who is not actively performing medical services in the State of California to maintain licensure in an inactive license status. A licensee on inactive status may not perform medical services.

If your California physician assistant license is currently suspended, revoked or otherwise restricted by the Board, an inactive license status cannot be granted.

To change your license status to inactive, please submit a [Request for Inactive License Status form](#) to the Board.

Important points to remember:

Inactivating a license does not change its expiration date and the renewal fee is the same as the fee for an active license. There are no fee exemptions for inactive licenses. An inactive license must be renewed during the same time period in which an active license is renewed.

If you are renewing at the same time as you apply for an inactive status, you must submit the full renewal fee with this application.

If the license is delinquent, a payment of all accrued renewal fees and delinquency fee must be submitted.

If your physician assistant license has not expired, no fee is required at this time.

Once on inactive status, you will be exempt from complying with the continuing medical education requirements.

The inactive status of any licensee does not deprive the Board of its authority to institute or continue any disciplinary or enforcement action against the licensee.

REMEMBER: If you hold an inactive license, you cannot engage in any activity in California for which an active physician assistant license is required.

### **ACTIVATING AN INACTIVE STATUS LICENSE**

To restore an inactive license to active status you must:

Pay the renewal fee and delinquency fee, if applicable.

You must also complete continuing medical education equivalent to that required for a single renewal period of an active license. The CME must have been obtained within the last two years prior to applying to restore the license to active status.

You may also comply with the continuing medical education requirements by maintaining your certification by the NCCPA.

Activating your inactive status license does not extend the expiration date of your license. The same expiration date will apply.

### **AUDIT AND SANCTIONS FOR NONCOMPLIANCE**

The Board will audit a random sample of physician assistants who have reported compliance with the continuing medical education requirements. Those physician assistants selected for audit will be required to document their compliance with the continuing medical education requirements and will be required to provide to the Board the records retained.

Physician assistants who comply with the continuing medical education requirements by certification by the NCCPA need not provide such records if the Board is able to obtain the records directly from the NCCPA.

### **NONCOMPLIANCE**

Falsely representing compliance with CME requirements is considered unprofessional conduct and is a basis for enforcement action. The PAC may issue a citation or take discipline against the licensee, up to and including revocation of the license.

In addition to any enforcement action, any physician assistant found not to have completed the required number of hours of approved continuing medical education, or found not to hold a valid certification from the NCCPA at the time of renewal, will be required to make up any deficiency during the next biennial renewal period.

After identifying a deficiency in an audit, a physician assistant will be required to fulfill and document any deficient hours identified to the Board. Any physician assistant who fails to make up the deficient hours during the following renewal period is ineligible for renewal of his or her license until such time as the deficient hours of continuing medical education are documented to the Board.

### **CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION REGULATIONS**

Section 1399.615. Continuing Medical Education Required.

(a) A physician assistant who renews his or her license on or after January 1, 2011, is required to complete fifty (50) hours of approved continuing medical education during each two (2) year renewal period.

(b) The requirements of subdivision (a) shall be deemed satisfied if the physician assistant, at the time of renewal, is certified by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants.

(c) Each physician assistant in order to renew his or her license at each renewal thereof shall report compliance with the provisions of this article by declaring upon application that he or she has complied with the continuing medical education requirements or that the provisions of subdivision (b) are applicable.

(d) Any physician assistant who does not complete the required hours of approved continuing medical education during the two-year period immediately preceding the expiration date of the license shall be ineligible for renewal of his or her license under section 1399.617, unless such physician assistant applies for and obtains a waiver pursuant to Section 1399.618 below.

(e) A physician assistant shall retain, for a period of four years after the acquisition of the necessary continuing medical education, records issued by an approved continuing medical education provider that indicate the title of the course or program attended, the dates of attendance and the hours assigned to the course or program, or if a physician assistant is certified by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants at the time of license renewal, evidence of certification shall be retained for four (4) years after such certification is issued.

Note: Authority cited: Section 3510, Business and Professions Code. Reference: Section 3524.5, Business and Professions Code.

1399.616. Approved Continuing Medical Education Programs.

(a) Programs are approved by the board for continuing medical education if they are designated as Category I (Preapproved) by one of the following sponsors:

(1) American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA).

(2) American Medical Association (AMA).

(3) American Osteopathic Association Council on Continuing Medical Education (AOACCME).

(4) American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP).

(5) Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME).

(6) A state medical society recognized by the ACCME.

(b) Continuing medical education obtained from a program other than those specified in subdivision (a) shall not satisfy the continuing education requirement in subdivision (a) of section 1399.615.

Note: Authority cited: Section 3510, Business and Professions Code. Reference: Section 3524.5, Business and Professions Code.

1399.617. Audit and Sanctions for Noncompliance.

(a) The board may audit a random sample of physician assistants who have reported compliance with the continuing medical education requirement. Those physician assistants selected for audit shall be required to document their compliance with the continuing medical education requirements of this article and shall be required to provide to the board the records retained pursuant to subdivision (e) of section 1399.615, except that a physician assistant who complies with the continuing medical education requirements of certification by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants need not provide such records if the board may obtain the records directly from the Commission.

(b) It shall constitute unprofessional conduct for any physician assistant to misrepresent his or her compliance with the provisions of this article.

(c) In addition to any enforcement action, any physician assistant who was found not to have completed the required number of hours of approved continuing medical education or was found not to hold a valid certification from the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants at the time of renewal will be required to make up any deficiency during the next biennial renewal period. Such physician assistant shall document to the board the completion of any deficient hours identified by the audit. Any physician assistant who fails to make up the deficient hours during the following renewal period shall be ineligible for renewal of his or her license to perform medical services until such time as the deficient hours of continuing medical education are documented to the board.

Note: Authority cited: Section 3510, Business and Professions Code. Reference: Section 3524.5, Business and Professions Code.

1399.618. Waiver of Continuing Medical Education Requirement.

(a) The board or its designee may, in its discretion, exempt a licensee from the continuing medical education requirements for a renewal cycle, if the licensee cannot meet those requirements for reasons of health, military service, or undue hardship.

(b) Any licensee whose application for a waiver is denied by the board, shall be ineligible for active renewal of his or her license to perform medical services unless the licensee complies with the provisions of Section 1399.615.

Note: Authority cited: Section 3510, Business and Professions Code. Reference: Section 3524.5, Business and Professions Code.

#### 1399.619. Inactive Status.

(a) Upon written request, the board may grant inactive status to a licensee if, at the time of application for inactive status, the license is current and not suspended, revoked, or otherwise punitively restricted by the board.

(b) A licensee who is inactive shall not engage in any activity for which a license is required.

(c) An inactive license shall be renewed during the same time period in which an active license is renewed. Any continuing medical education requirements for renewing a license are waived.

(d) The renewal fee for an inactive license is the same as the fee to renew an active license.

(e) To restore an inactive license to an active status, the holder shall do both of the following: 1) Pay the renewal fee. 2) Complete continuing medical education equivalent to that required for a single renewal period of an active license within the last two years prior to applying to restore the license to active status.

(f) The inactive status of any licensee does not deprive the board of its authority to institute or continue any disciplinary or enforcement action against the licensee.

(g) A license may be placed in inactive status if the licensee applies for renewal and pays all applicable fees, but fails to comply with the continuing medical education requirements of this article.

Note: Authority cited: Section 3510, Business and Professions Code. Reference: Sections 118, 700-704, 3510, 3523, 3524 and 3524.5, Business and Professions Code.