



Commission on Continuing Professional Development 2024 Annual Report

Commission on Continuing Professional Development

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Purpose & Scope of Work

The Commission on Continuing Professional Development works directly to support the AAFP's Strategic Objective on continuing professional development by supporting the lifelong learning of family physician members and other healthcare professionals. The goals of the commission are to guide the AAFP's Credit System and the AAFP's provision of continuing medical education that helps members and other healthcare professionals demonstrate continuous improvement in knowledge, competence, practice performance, and patient outcomes, as well as fulfill the educational requirements for licensure and certification.

The COCPD's priority areas of attention include:

1. AAFP CME Accreditation of various credit categories
2. Development, presentation, maintenance, and refinement of existing and novel CME/CPD delivery methods and modalities.
3. CME/CPD aspects of Continuing Board Certification and Maintenance of Licensure
4. AAFP CME / CPD Educational Strategy and Plan.
5. Oversight of the planning, provision, and evaluation of all AAFP-provided CME activities.

Activities & Achievements

This year, all members of the COCPD and the Commission on Membership and Member Services (CMMS) reviewed the findings of the study of CME Membership requirements initiated by the COCPD and COCPD subcommittee at the 2023 winter cluster in response to the board chair's request for a holistic recommendation across the 2022 COD Resolutions 202 and 208 and Emergency Resolution 1.

For context, Resolution 202 reinstated the requirement for AAFP members to have 25 credits of live CME to maintain active membership, however it did not give members in the 2021-2023 reelection cycle their full cycle to meet this requirement. Emergency Resolution 1 was adopted

to place a pause on reinstating the live requirement CME as specified in resolution 202 until after the adjournment of the 2023 COD. Resolution 208 called for the AAFP to conduct a study regarding the continuation of any CME requirements as a condition of AAFP membership. With the passage of this resolution came the inherent contradiction of calling for an investigation of the elimination of all CME requirements while simultaneously adopting a resolution that reinstated the live CME requirement. As such, these resolutions were referred to the board of directors, and the board chair asked the COCPD and CMMS to review these resolutions holistically and make a single recommendation for a path forward.

Based on the information contained in the study on the *Impact of the Elimination of CME Requirements* and the robust discussion among the members of the COCPD and CMMS, the following recommendations have been made to the AAFP board of directors:

1. *Retain the current CME requirements as written (retaining the sunseting of the live CME requirement).*
2. *Initiate discussions with certifying bodies in order to harmonize CME requirements.*
3. *Dedicate staff time and resources for the AAFP to work with chapters to evolve CME portfolios to address the needs of a broader spectrum of learners.*

As in previous years, the COCPD received some important updates from the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) from the ABFM President and CEO, Dr. Warren Newton. A great deal of discussion was centered on the success and popularity of the Family Medicine Certification Longitudinal Assessment (FMCLA) over the traditional one-day board exam. Thus far, 93% of those who have enrolled for examination in 2025 have chosen FMCLA, and the final four-year passing rate (92.66%) has been comparable to the 2019 cohort and comparable populations taking the one day exam. Further discussion was centered on some of the rich data the ABFM has been analyzing regarding Family Medicine residency In Training Examination Score trends and the areas of support the ABFM is focusing on with the implementation of Competency Based Medical Education (The ABFM recently published guidelines for implementing competency-based board eligibility for Residency Programs to reference).

The COCPD discussed several additional topics resulting in the following recommendations being brought for consideration by the Board of Directors:

- **Functional Medicine Topic-Specific Guidance:** The AAFP Credit System has spent a significant amount of time assessing the eligibility of topics focused on Functional Medicine (FM). The most recent re-review of topic specific requirements for Functional Medicine was conducted in July 2023. At that time an in-depth literature review was conducted to determine the current state of FM and what has changed/ emerged since 2018 (which was the last time such a review was conducted). Unfortunately, there is little to no literature to support FM in isolation, so the literature review focused on reviewing the specific modalities using FM treatment such as gut microbiome and FM approaches to heart disease, chronic pain, and women's health. Ultimately, the research did not reveal significant evolution of evidence for these topics. As such, the usefulness of the topic-specific guidance and whether FM topics should be assessed against the AAFP Credit System's Eligibility Requirements was discussed among the members of the COCPD. Given the infrequency with which FM topics are seen and the lack of a significant evolution of FM topics, the Committee recommended continuing the current practice and documenting this information for future assessments.

- **Revisions to the AAFP/ CFPC Reciprocal Agreement Policy:** The AAFP Credit System and the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) have a long history of alignment with accreditation standards and a longstanding credit reciprocity agreement policy that recognizes activities certified for AAFP's Prescribed and CFPC's Mainpro+ Certified Credit across both systems as a benefit to US and Canadian based Family Physicians. Recent revisions to the CFPC's Participation Standards and to the Mainpro+ Certification Standards were recently made to simplify the certification process and further ensure high quality, relevant, and outcome-oriented continuing professional development. This is set to go into effect in September 2024. These revisions were discussed and the COCPD voted to recommend the changes to the AAFP/CFPC reciprocal agreement policy which align the policy with revised terminology.

Lastly, the commission heard the Credit System Annual Report and an overview and monthly report on the AAFP's Educational Approach.

Lessons Learned and the Value of Serving on the COCPD

Dr. Christopher Veal (PGY-3): The greatest lesson I learned from my time on this commission is the importance of being in the "room where it happens" (to shamelessly quote Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton*). As the Resident representative on this commission, I had the chance to speak very candidly with the President and CEO of the American Board of Family Medicine, Dr. Warren Newton, about the downtrends in performance on the In Training Examinations (ITE's) of Family Medicine Residents from 2020-2022. While he commented on the improvement of ITE scores for residents taking the exam in 2023, he noted that residents this year are still "1.25 years behind residents of 2019 in terms of knowledge." I pushed back on this data point and asked Dr. Newton if the ABFM had considered the impact that working through COVID-19 as an overworked, physically and mentally exhausted Family Medicine Resident, could have on the motivation to prepare or even take the annual ITE? Furthermore, I questioned the insight the ABFM had on the culture of survival among FM Residents during that unprecedented time that was focused more on getting through the strain of our role in our workforce rather than focusing solely on academic achievement through our performance on an exam that in many cases (speaking for myself and the experiences I have had in my central Illinois residency program) did not have any impact on our training or advancement towards graduation. I know of many FM residents that did not take the ITE seriously during that time because they had more pressing matters to take seriously at the time, and quite frankly they were burnt out (also speaking from personal experience). It is notable however that when one analyzes the pass rates of the final board exam all residents must take prior to obtaining their full medical license (The United States Medical Licensure Exam, USMLE) Step 3, the pass rate remained at 97% through 2020-2022. The same trend is seen with the pass rate of first-time examinees for the Family Medicine Certification Exam. Dr. Newton truly appreciated this discussion and insight from the perspective of a Resident Physician that represented one of the data points he was referencing. While he and the data analytics team at the ABFM had not necessarily considered the social dynamics during the pandemic that contributed to the ITE scores during that time period, he appreciated the insight and planned to discuss this among his team at a later date. While I cannot prove that he actually carried this insight back to the ABFM, I appreciated his willingness and openness to having a dynamic conversation with me and Priyanka regarding the examination and conclusions drawn about our generation of new physicians and trainees. I do believe our presence on the commission made a difference in the

decisions and recommendations made during the winter cluster, among the leadership of the ABFM, throughout our Commission and the conference of all Commissions. The power that our role in these spaces cultivates will never fail to amaze me. I encourage anyone and everyone that has a dream of having a wide-reaching impact, to consider running for a leadership position within the AAFP and/ or joining a Commission. You will not regret it!

Note: This report was prepared by the resident or student representative(s) listed and includes their account(s) of the business conducted during their term. This is not an official record of business proceedings from the AAFP or any other entity. To find out more about the business of the AAFP, its congresses, commissions, and current policies visit aafp.org.