CME achievement unlocked: How the AMA PRA credit system helps you

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In 1955, the AMA surveyed 5,000 practicing physicians to determine how many participated in postgraduate medical education (PGME). Almost one-third stated they had not participated in formal PGME for at least five years after completion of residency.

To address a lack of direction and clearly defined objectives, the AMA House of Delegates (HOD) took several actions to improve the way physicians stayed abreast of advances in their field of medicine, including the creation of a standing Advisory Committee on Continuing Medical Education. By 1968, after the committee developed a nationwide accreditation system for CME providers, the AMA Physician’s Recognition Award (PRA) was created with the credit system as a metric for determining eligibility for the award.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the AMA PRA and credit system. To commemorate five decades of helping physicians learn, improve, provide better cares and meet CME requirements, here are a few benefits of the AMA PRA CME credit system.

Adapts to changing needs. As the field of medicine continues to change along with the needs of physicians and their practices, the AMA PRA CME credit system adapts too. By recognizing that physicians learn in different ways and that there are a variety of educational formats that should be recognized for credit, the AMA’s Council on Medical Education continues to approve new CME options.

For example, the most recent addition was the format of “other,” in 2017. This covers activities that meet core requirements for quality educational activities but do not fall within one of the already existing educational formats.

Can be used worldwide. In 1990, the HOD adopted a report to establish a process for qualified international conferences to receive AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™. The International Conference
Recognition Program continues to be used to this day.

International opportunities that can earn physicians CME credit have also expanded to include activities covered by agreements between the AMA and credit systems of other regions and nations.

The three agreements currently in existence right now are the:

- European Union of Medical Specialists.
- Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.
- Qatar Council for Healthcare Practitioners.

By remaining responsive to the needs of physicians, the PRA CME credit system ensures adequate recognition for doctors’ participation in certified CME activities worldwide.

**Most widely accepted CME credit.** The AMA PRA credit is the most widely accepted CME credit used by physicians of all specialties. It is used to document CME participation for licensing boards, certification boards, hospital credentialing committees, insurance groups and other organizations.

Washington D.C., 45 U.S. states and four territories have CME requirements for licensure of physicians that recognize *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™* to fulfill those requirements.