

HOD ACTION: Council on Medical Education Report 7 adopted, and the remainder of the report filed.

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL ON MEDICAL EDUCATION

CME Report 7-I-18

Subject: 50th Anniversary of the AMA Physician's Recognition Award and Credit System

Presented by: Carol Berkowitz, MD, Chair

1 INTRODUCTION

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3 The American Medical Association (AMA) is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the AMA
4 Physician's Recognition Award (PRA) this year. This report regarding the AMA PRA, and the
5 credit system that was developed to support this award, is submitted to the House of Delegates
6 (HOD) for informational purposes.

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8 The AMA has played a central role in the development of continuing medical education (CME) in
9 the United States by developing the AMA PRA credit system, which codified the requirements and
10 standards for earning *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit*[™] and *AMA PRA Category 2 Credit*[™]. The
11 AMA PRA was established by the HOD in December 1968 to recognize physicians who, by
12 participating in CME activities, have demonstrated their commitment to staying current with
13 advances in medicine. The 1968 report adopted by the HOD that established the AMA PRA
14 included the following goals:

- 15 1. To provide recognition for the many thousands of physicians who regularly participate in
16 CME.
- 17 2. To encourage each physician to keep up-to-date and to improve knowledge and judgment by
18 CME.
- 19 3. To provide reassurance to the public that America's physicians are maintaining their
20 competence by regular participation in CME.
- 21 4. To emphasize the AMA's position as a leader in CME.
- 22 5. To emphasize the importance of developing more meaningful continuing education
23 opportunities for physicians.

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30 STATUS OF THE AMA PRA AND CREDIT SYSTEM

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32 AMA PRA credit is the most widely accepted CME credit used by physicians of all specialties to
33 document CME participation for licensing boards, certification boards, hospital credentialing
34 committees, insurance groups, and other organizations. A total of 50 U.S. jurisdictions, including
35 45 states, four territories, and Washington, DC, currently have CME requirements for licensure of
36 physicians; all recognize AMA PRA credit to fulfill these requirements. Many jurisdictions accept
37 the AMA PRA certificate or an approved AMA PRA application as documentation of meeting their
38 CME requirements.

1 The AMA PRA credit system has continued to respond to the needs of physicians and to changes in
2 the practice of medicine. Recognizing that physicians learn in different ways and that a variety of
3 educational formats should be recognized for credit, the AMA Council on Medical Education has
4 approved new educational formats for *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™* over the years, in addition to
5 the original formats of live certified activities and enduring materials. Subsequently approved
6 formats include Journal-Based CME (1998), Manuscript Review (2003), Test Item Writing (2003),
7 Performance Improvement CME (2004), and Internet Point-of-Care (2005). Most recently, in 2017,
8 the Council on Medical Education approved a format of “Other” for those activities that meet core
9 requirements but do not fall within one of the already existing formats.

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11 Previous domestic credit system innovations include the following:

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13 1. Permitting physicians to self-claim *AMA PRA Category 2 Credit™* for educational
14 experiences (not designated for *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™*) that comply with the
15 AMA definition of CME and pertinent Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs
16 opinions; and
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- 18 2. Allowing physicians to apply directly to the AMA for *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™*
19 for defined activities that have been recognized as worthwhile learning experiences but
20 are not certified for credit through an accredited CME provider. These include teaching
21 at live CME activities that are designated for *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™*;
22 publishing articles in MEDLINE indexed journals; presenting a poster that is included
23 in the published abstracts for a conference certified for *AMA PRA Category 1*
24 *Credit™*; earning medically-related advanced degrees; completing an American Board
25 of Medical Specialties (ABMS) member board certification process (a primary ABMS
26 member board certification/recertification or a subspecialty board certification/
27 recertification); or successfully completing an Accreditation Council for Graduate
28 Medical Education-accredited residency or fellowship.
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30 The AMA PRA credit system also operates beyond U.S. borders. In 1990, the HOD adopted a
31 Council on Medical Education report to establish a process for qualified international conferences
32 to offer *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™* to attendees. The International Conference Recognition
33 Program continues to this day, and international opportunities to earn *AMA PRA Category 1*
34 *Credit™* have expanded to include activities covered by agreements between the AMA and credit
35 systems of other regions and nations. Three agreements currently exist, with the European Union of
36 Medical Specialists, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, and the Qatar
37 Council for Healthcare Practitioners.
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39 Finally, the AMA has embarked upon an ongoing process with the Accreditation Council for
40 Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) with the intent of aligning the credit and accreditation
41 systems and simplifying the process for both physicians and CME providers. Organizations that are
42 accredited by either the ACCME or an ACCME-recognized state medical society are given the
43 privilege, by the AMA, of certifying activities for *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™* and awarding
44 that credit to physicians. That privilege may be withdrawn by the AMA if the accredited CME
45 provider fails to bring the program and activities into compliance with AMA PRA policies,
46 regardless of accreditation status. Recently, the AMA developed a process with the ACCME to
47 revise requirements for accredited CME providers. That process led to development of aligned and
48 simplified requirements that became effective September 29, 2017. The AMA and the ACCME
49 will continue to work together to modernize and evolve CME activities while maintaining
50 educational quality.

1 CURRENT AMA POLICY

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3 AMA policies related to this topic are listed in the Appendix.

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5 SUMMARY

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7 The past 50 years have seen many changes in CME, and the AMA has led many of these changes
8 by adapting the AMA PRA and the credit system to include new concepts, introduce new ideas,
9 and recognize the multiple ways in which physicians learn and improve. The AMA PRA credit
10 system must continue to be responsive to the needs of physicians to ensure they are adequately
11 recognized for their participation in certified CME activities. To achieve this goal, the Council on
12 Medical Education recognizes the importance of its continued stewardship of this valuable process.

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14 As the AMA celebrates the 50th anniversary of this award, the Council on Medical Education
15 would like to draw attention to Policy H-300.959, "Physician Participation in the AMA Physician's
16 Recognition Award," which states that: "(1) the AMA, state medical societies, and specialty
17 societies in the AMA House of Delegates publicize and promote physician participation in the
18 AMA Physician's Recognition Award; and (2) that all physicians participate in the AMA
19 Physician's Recognition Award as a visible demonstration of their commitment to continuing
20 medical education." (CME Rep. 1, I-93; Reaffirmed with change in title: CME Rep. 2, A-05;
21 Reaffirmed: CME Rep. 1, A-15)

APPENDIX: RELEVANT AMA POLICY

H-275.917, “An Update on Maintenance of Licensure”

3. Our AMA will: A. Continue to support and promote the AMA Physician’s Recognition Award (PRA) Credit system as one of the three major CME credit systems that comprise the foundation for continuing medical education in the United States, including the Performance Improvement CME (PICME) format, and continue to develop relationships and agreements that may lead to standards accepted by all U.S. licensing boards, specialty boards, hospital credentialing bodies, and other entities requiring evidence of physician CME as part of the process for MOL.

H-275.924, “Maintenance of Certification”

AMA Principles on Maintenance of Certification (MOC): 10. In relation to MOC Part II, our AMA continues to support and promote the AMA Physician’s Recognition Award (PRA) Credit system as one of the three major credit systems that comprise the foundation for continuing medical education in the United States, including the Performance Improvement CME (PICME) format; and continues to develop relationships and agreements that may lead to standards accepted by all U.S. licensing boards, specialty boards, hospital credentialing bodies and other entities requiring evidence of physician CME.

H-295.926, “Support for Development of Continuing Education Programs for Primary Care Physicians in Non-Academic Settings”

The AMA: (1) supports development, where appropriate, of programs of education for medical students and faculty in non-academic settings, making use of telecommunications as needed; (2) encourages that medical schools provide faculty development programs that are designated for *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™*; and (3) encourages that teaching continue to be accepted for *AMA PRA Category 2 Credit™* when not designated for *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™*.

H-300.955, “Restructuring of Continuing Medical Education Credits”

The AMA encourages state licensing boards with CME reporting requirements to allow *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™* and *AMA PRA Category 2 Credit™* toward reregistration of the license to practice medicine; and all state licensing boards be urged to accept a current and valid AMA Physician’s Recognition Award as evidence of completion of these requirements.

H-300.959, “Physician Participation in the AMA Physician’s Recognition Award”

It is policy that: (1) the AMA, state medical societies, and specialty societies in the AMA House of Delegates publicize and promote physician participation in the AMA Physician’s Recognition Award; and (2) that all physicians participate in the AMA Physician’s Recognition Award as a visible demonstration of their commitment to continuing medical education.

H-300.974, “Unification of Continuing Education Credits”

Our AMA accepts American Academy of Family Physicians prescribed credit hours and American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists cognate credit hours for formal learning, as equivalent to *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™*.

H-300.977, “Revisions to the Physician’s Recognition Award”

Our AMA has adopted the following changes in the Physician's Recognition Award: (1) to accept recertification by an AMA-recognized specialty board in satisfaction of requirements for a three-year PRA certificate; (2) to allow credit for international conferences when these have been approved by the AMA prior to the event; and (3) to allow credit for teaching to be reported for *AMA PRA Category 2 Credit*TM toward the award.

D-300.999, "Registration of Accredited CME Sponsors"

1. Our AMA will continue cooperative efforts to assure that accredited sponsors of continuing medical education adhere to AMA Physician's Recognition Award (PRA) policy when designating AMA PRA credit. 2. Our AMA will remind all accredited CME providers of their responsibility, as stated in the AMA PRA requirements, to provide documentation to participating physicians of the credit awarded at the request of the physician.

H-480.974, "Evolving Impact of Telemedicine"

Our AMA: (7) will develop a means of providing appropriate continuing medical education credit, acceptable toward the Physician's Recognition Award, for educational consultations using telemedicine...