Gap Analysis Guidance

SAPS CME
SOUTHERN ALLIANCE FOR PHYSICIAN SPECIALTIES
CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION

In accordance with the requirements of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), SAPS CME requires that Activity Directors and Educational Partners rely on practice gap data to support educational content and programming. Effective CME must do more than present new knowledge, the process must begin with an analysis of current professional practice to identify specific health issues and interventions where outcomes fall short of goals.

Identification and analysis of professional practice gaps and educational needs provides the basis for developing educational interventions. The Activity Director and Planning Committee should consider answering the following questions before beginning the CME Activity Application.

- How significantly will the professional practice gap and unfulfilled need hinder health care delivery?
- How many different sources indicated this need? (ex. national guidelines, consensus statements, peer-reviewed literature)
- How directly is the need related to actual physician performance?
- How likely is it that the proposed CME activity will improve practice behavior?
- Are sufficient resources available to effectively address this topic?
- Is your proposed activity the most appropriate methodology for changing professional practice?
- How receptive will the target audience be to an activity addressing this topic?
- This guide aims to assist Activity Directors and planning committee members in completing the Gap Analysis Section of the CME Activity Application in seeking credit designation for an activity.

Professional Practice Gaps

A professional practice gap is defined as the difference between ACTUAL (what is) and IDEAL (what should be) in regards to knowledge, competence, or performance. Competence is defined as the ability to apply knowledge, skills, and judgment in practice (knowing how to do something). Performance is defined as what one actual does, in practice.

What problem is the activity is planned to address and how are the intended participants involved?
Describe the difference between best practice and current practice of your intended audience/participants. A best practice may be outlined in a national guideline or consensus statement from a credible organization, from peer-reviewed medical literature where more than one source agree on the practice, or from the considered opinion of the expert planning committee member(s) in the case when no published guideline exists.

Ex. Learners face interdepartmental challenges with management of difficult/complex head and neck cancer patient care scenarios.

Educational Needs
An educational need is defined as "the need for education on a specific topic identified by a gap in professional practice."

Why does the problem exist?

Describe the reason(s) why the problem (professional practice gap) outlined above exists. A few examples of why a practice gap could exist are:

- New methods of diagnosis or treatment

- Availability of new medication(s) or indication(s)

- Development of new technology

- Input from experts regarding advances in medical knowledge

- Acquisition of new facilities or equipment

- Legislative, regulatory, or organizational changes affecting patient care

- Verbalized needs and interests which may be derived from:

  - Requests submitted on participants' activity evaluation forms
  - Formal surveys of potential participants (mail and/or internet based)
  - Informal comments
  - Patient problem inventories compiled by potential participants
  - Consensus of faculty members within a department/division or service area

Ex. Providers of patients with difficult/complex head and neck cancers are not utilizing the appropriate management options because they are not aware of the newer options now available.

Sources to Aid in Identification of Practice Gaps and Educational Needs

Institutional:

- Morbidity/Mortality

- Quality Assurance/audit data

- Re-credentialing reviews

- Statistics Infection control data

- Surgical procedure statistics

Local/Regional/National:

- Epidemiological Data
- News Media
- Professional society requirements
- Journal articles/literature citations

Quality and Other Data Sources Available Online:

- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

- American Medical Association: Physician Consortium for Performance Improvement

- Association of American Medical Colleges: Quality Measures

- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

- Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project Databases

- Institute for Healthcare Improvement

- Medicare.gov Hospital Compare

- National Committee on Quality Assurance: Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) Measures

Learning Objectives
Learning objectives are the take-home messages; what should the learner be able to accomplish after the activity? Objectives should bridge the gap between the identified need/gap and the desired result.

What do we want to change?

The learning objectives describe what learners will be able to do to address the identified professional practice gap(s). Each objective should include a verb that is chosen to describe something the learner will be able to do.
A few examples of learning objective verbs: apply, select, develop a strategy to

Ex. Learners will be able to select appropriate management options for patients with difficult/complex head and neck cancers.

Desired Results
Desired results are what you expect the learner to do in his/her practice setting. How will the information presented impact the clinical practice and/or behavior of the learner?

Ex. Participant evaluations indicate a high confidence and commitment to changing practice based on increased knowledge of appropriate management options for patients with difficult/complex head and neck cancers. This will be measured by a post-activity evaluation as well as a 3-month and 6-month follow up evaluation to determine if learners implemented the change.

How will you know if the activity was effective in producing change?

Following the activity, how will you know if the activity has been successful in "closing" the practice gap of your learners? Describe how you will measure the change.