SAPS CME
SOUTHERN ALLIANCE FOR PHYSICIAN SPECIALTIES CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Accredited Continuing Education

The Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education were implemented on January 1, 2022.

Who is the ACCME?

ACCME is the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education and is the organization that sets the standards for the accreditation of all providers of Accredited Continuing Education activities (aka CME).

Who is the AMA?

The American Medical Association unites doctors nationwide to address key professional and public health issues.

What types of activities qualify for Accredited Continuing Education certification?

A wide variety of educational activities qualify for accredited continuing education certification, including, but not limited to:

- Lectures and live meetings in which learners are physically or remotely present.
- "Enduring Materials" - activities based on recorded or published.
- Journal Based accredited continuing education activities.
- Internet Live Activities

For more detailed information, please click the following link:
https://www.accme.org/faq/what-kind-activity-types-can-be-reported-pars

What type of accredited continuing education credit does physicians need?

AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ is the predominant type of credit required by physicians for maintaining their medical licenses. To qualify as an activity designated for ***AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™,*** it must be organized by an accredited educational provider.

May a non-US licensed physician be awarded *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™*?

Yes. *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit*™ may be granted to any physician, including those holding MD, DO degrees, or equivalent international qualifications. The criteria for awarding *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit*™ are consistent for both US and non-US licensed physicians.

How is the amount of credit determined for certified live activities that are not in one-hour increments?

Credit for live activities can be given in 15 minutes or 0.25 credit increments, rounded to the nearest quarter hour. Only the educational portions of an activity count towards credit; breaks and lunches do not.

What is the difference between Category 1 and Category 2 credit?

According to the American Medical Association *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™ activities* are:

- Activities must have documented needs assessment, learning objectives, educational design, evaluation method, and disclosure.

- Fully comply with ACCME Standards for Commercial Support.
- Certified for credit by an ACCME-accredited CME Provider.

Category 2 "self-claim" credits:

- Informally planned physician-initiated activities such as practice-based self-study, consultations with colleagues, teaching, M&M conferences, etcetera.
- *SAPS CME is not involved with planning, certifying, or tracking Category 2 activities*.

When should the Accreditation Statement be used?

The SAPS CME Accreditation Statement must be included in all pertinent announcements, activity materials, and any document that mentions the number of *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)™* designated for the activity. Below is the SAPS CME Accreditation Statement for Joint Providers:

*This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the accreditation requirements and policies of the Medical Association of Georgia through the joint providership of Southern Alliance for Physician Specialties CME (SAPS CME) and **[Insert Organization Name]**. SAPS CME is accredited by the Medical Association of Georgia to provide continuing medical education for physicians.*

*The Southern Alliance for Physician Specialties CME designates this (activity format) for a maximum of ___**AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™**. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.*

What is the cost of Accredited Continuing Education certification?

The cost of certifying your activity for credit depends on:

- Type of activity (Joint vs. Directly Provided)
- Number of credit hours
- Estimated number of participants/learners
- If you are a member of a SAPS CME Member organization

*****All fees are listed on our website: www.sapscme.org*****

How do I obtain Accredited CE credit for my activity?

To become pre-approved for an activity with SAPS CME, a completed Application/Planning Document and accompanying documentation must be submitted for consideration. Refer to the Planning Guide

What is the difference between direct, joint, and co-sponsorship?

Direct Providership: If you or a member of your planning committee belongs to one of the SAPS CME Member Organizations, you qualify for direct providership with reduced fees. The member list is available on our website.

Joint Providership: This refers to an educational activity developed and implemented by two institutions or organizations, with only one of the entities being accredited by the ACCME. The accredited provider (SAPS CME) must assume responsibility for the CME activity when it is conducted in collaboration with a non-accredited institution or organization. An ineligible company cannot serve as a non-accredited entity in a joint sponsorship arrangement.

Co-sponsorship: An accredited continuing education activity presented by two or more accredited providers. One institution must take responsibility for the activity.

Why do faculty/planners need to complete a financial disclosure form?

The ACCME requires CME providers, like SAPS CME, to disclose all relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies, and non-relevant financial relationships. This ensures educational content remains unbiased. For more information, review the ACCME's definition of relevant financial relationships: See below:

Common Types of Financial Relationships to Disclose

- Individuals must disclose **all** financial relationships with ineligible companies, regardless of whether they believe the relationship is relevant to the educational topic. Common examples include:
- **Employment or Executive Roles** (full-time or part-time)
- **Consulting, Advising, or Independent Contracting**
- **Speaking, Teaching, or Participating in Speakers' Bureaus**
- **Research Support or Grants** (including contracted research, whether funds are paid to the individual or their institution)
- **Ownership Interests** (stocks, stock options, or other ownership interests, excluding diversified mutual funds)
- **Intellectual Property** (royalties, patent beneficiaries, or licensing fees)
- **Governance or Committee Service** (membership on boards of directors, advisory committees, or review panels)

The following steps can be used as a guide for Joint Providers:

- **Step 1: Collect Disclosures**
  Gather signed disclosure forms from everyone involved in planning, developing, or presenting content prior to their involvement in the activity.
- **Step 2: Exclude Owners and Employees**
  Individuals who are owners or employees of ineligible companies must be excluded from controlling content or participating as planners or faculty, except in very narrow, ACCME Standard 3 approved circumstances (e.g., when the content is not related to the business lines of the company, or when demonstrating how to use a specific device safely without discussing clinical recommendations).
- **Step 3: Identify and Mitigate Relevant Relationships**
  Review all collected disclosures to determine which relationships are relevant to the educational content. For any relevant financial relationship identified, apply and document an appropriate mitigation strategy (e.g., peer review of content, recusal from planning specific sessions, or altering the individual's role) *before* the activity takes place.
- **Step 4: Disclose to Learners**
  Before the activity begins, inform learners of the presence or absence of all relevant financial relationships for everyone in control of content. This disclosure must include:
- The name of the individual.
- The name of the ineligible company.
- The nature of the relationship.
- A statement confirming that all relevant financial relationships have been mitigated.
  (Note: If no individuals have relevant financial relationships, learners must be informed of that fact as well.)

Is it okay for a pharmaceutical sales representative to bring in food for a Grand Rounds session?

No, pharmaceutical sales representatives or representatives of medical product/device manufacturers cannot pay directly for the food. However, they can provide an educational grant to your organization in support of the food costs.

A pharmaceutical company has offered to provide an educational grant to cover the speaker's honorarium, but they will "take care of the speaker's travel." Is this okay?

No, the ACCME Standard 4 of the Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education state that all support from ineligible companies be provided to the accredited provider in the form of an educational grant.

Can a pharmaceutical company choose who will speak at my department's meeting?

No, it is up to the Activity Medical Director to select appropriate topics and speakers for their activity based upon the target audience's educational needs. The Activity Medical Director can request a Speaker List from a pharmaceutical representative and then select an appropriate speaker and topic from the list. The Activity Medical Director should then communicate with the chosen speaker and delineate the learning objectives he/she would like the speaker to address.

A pharmaceutical company has provided an educational grant to support a grand rounds session that is certified for *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit*. The company has signed a grant agreement to cover the meeting expenses; one of the sales representatives wants to give a short presentation on the company's newest product at the beginning (or end) of the session…is this allowed?

No, Joint providers cannot allow representatives of Ineligible Companies to engage in sales or promotional activities while in the space or place of educational activity.

Faculty with unmitigated financial relationships must not occur in the educational space within 30 minutes before or after an accredited education activity. For example, any non-CME lectures can occur 30 minutes before an educational activity, which can be resumed 30 minutes after the presentation, (Standard 5 – Manage Ancillary Activities).

Reviewed and Approved by CME committee and Medical Association of Georgia – November 2026