



The Continuing Medical Education Coalition

CME Coalition Prospectus

2022



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INTRODUCTION

As we enter our eleventh year, the Continuing Medical Education (CME) Coalition (cmecoalition.org) is firmly established as the sector's undisputed voice — on the state, local and federal levels — for policy matters that impact the provision of post-graduate education to the health care workforce. Based in Washington, DC, the CME Coalition is a membership organization comprised of the nation's leading CME providers, beneficiaries (including both educational institutions and professional societies) and supporters of CME (such as pharmaceutical manufacturers and device makers) that exists to advocate for the importance of a robust national commitment to continuing medical education. Additional partnerships and affiliations have also been extended to health policy thought leaders and other interested parties who share an appreciation for the mission of the organization.

THE MISSION

In 2022, the CME Coalition will further build upon its legacy and execute on its mission to: (1) educate federal, state and third-party policy makers on issues related to the provision of CME; (2) advocate for sensible federal, state, and non-governmental actors' policies to advance the practice of CME; and (3) provide thought leadership and convene the CME stakeholder community to chart the future of CME in the evolving world of quality measures, value based contracting, and health system reform. This year, as our nation continues to battle the COVID-19 public health emergency, we will shift our narrative to amplify the role of CME in support of the national response to the pandemic and to seek additional government funding to support COVID-related medical education.

As in past years, the CME Coalition will fulfill these objectives by developing, managing, and implementing a comprehensive government affairs, stakeholder engagement, and public affairs strategy to promote the value of accredited CME to a broad audience of practitioners, supporters and policy makers.

The Coalition will also continue to serve as a vital conduit between our members and the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) and provide informational, analytical and legal resources for member organizations seeking assistance with understanding and implementing the myriad, and ever changing, rules and regulations that guide CME. With our members' support, we will remain a recognized policy thought leader and participates in numerous activities, programs and venues to better inform all CME stakeholders of the policy landscape and real-world trends impacting the enterprise.

2021 ACHIEVEMENTS

I. CME Compliance Guide

With the support of a special grant from a member in 2021, the Coalition employed its legal counsel at the nationally renowned firm of Arnold & Porter to produce a comprehensive compliance reference guide for the use of CME practitioners. The Guide, which has quickly proven to be an invaluable resource for individuals and organizations, was made available to all CME Coalition members for review, comment, and suggested changes prior to its release to the public at large.

Its final version spanned 47 pages and addressed 53 FAQs, and we anticipate updating it again in Q1 2022 to reference the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education's (ACCME) revised [Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education](#) (December 2020).

In October 2021, the Coalition also provided a special webinar with our legal counsel to address key elements of the Guide, answer questions, and identify additional areas for possible update. Additionally, the Coalition provided multiple members with one-on-one advisory counsel regarding implementation and interpretation of the Guide.

II. Comments to ACCME re: Commercial Standards

With the input of many of our members, the Coalition officially submitted comments on behalf of our collective membership to the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education's (ACCME) for consideration during its drafting of revised [Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education](#). We shared our comments with over 700 individuals who participated in our informational [webinar](#) on the subject.

The CME Coalition engaged with the ACCME over several months as it reviewed the submissions it received from various stakeholders. We were very pleased when the Standards were released in December 2020, and we found that they were largely reflective of our input.

III. Federal Legislative Tracking and Advocacy

In September, the CME Coalition officially endorsed four recently introduced bills aimed at advancing the role of continuing medical education in addressing several of our nation's health priorities. These letters, which are all available on our website, are described below. We were pleased with the incredibly positive response we received from congressional staff, who put great value on our endorsement and encouraged us to more actively engage in the legislative arena.

[CME Coalition Pens Letters of Support for CARA 3.0](#)

On September 15, 2021, the CME Coalition penned letters of support to Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) and Rep. David Trone (D-MD) endorsing the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) 3.0 Act of 2021 (S. 987/H.R. 4341). Introduced in both chambers of Congress earlier this year, this measure would require prescribers of controlled substances to complete their CME coursework every three years. It would also provide \$5 million toward health education and training grants through the

Public Health Service Act (PHSA).

“[The CME Coalition] appreciate[s] that you understand the importance of enhancing physician access to independent continuing education, especially as a means of combating the scourge of opioid abuse, and your leadership is invaluable to us,” wrote CME Coalition Senior Advisor Andrew Rosenberg. “We further thank you for your support on this important issue and look forward to working with you to drive greater support for the bill, as well as serving as a subject matter resource to you as the legislative process continues.”

[CME Coalition Sends Letters of Support Endorsing MATE Act](#)

On September 15, 2021, the CME Coalition sent letters of support to Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Rep. Lori Trahan (D-MA) for the Medication Access and Training Expansion (MATE) Act of 2021 (S. 2235/H.R. 2067). Introduced in both chambers earlier this year, this legislation would mandate CME for the prescribing of opioids and other controlled substances. It would also provide grant funding for professional associations to expand the integration of substance use disorder (SUD) education into the standard curriculum of health care education programs.

“[The CME Coalition] appreciate[s] that you understand the importance of enhancing physician access to independent continuing education, especially as a means of combating the scourge of substance abuse disorder, and your leadership is invaluable to us,” wrote CME Coalition Senior Advisor Andrew Rosenberg. “We look forward to your bill’s consideration and passage by the full Senate.”

[CME Coalition Pens Letter of Support for Lower Costs, More Cures Act](#)

On September 15, 2021, the CME Coalition penned a letter of support to Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) endorsing the Lower Costs, More Cures Act of 2021 (H.R. 19). Introduced in the House on April 22, 2021, this bill includes a provision that would require the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to advance education and awareness among health providers regarding biosimilars, including by developing and improving continuing education programs.

“The CME Coalition wholeheartedly endorses your legislation and believes that continuing medical education is an effective way to drive greater uptake of safe and effective biosimilars,” wrote CME Coalition Executive Director Chris Lamond. “We thank you for your support on this important issue and look forward to working with you to drive greater support for the bill, as well as serving as a subject matter resource to you as the legislative process continues.”

[CME Coalition Endorses Improving Access to Health Care in Rural and Underserved Areas Act](#)

In a letter to Sen. Jacky Rosen (D-NV), the CME Coalition endorsed a bill that would provide new grant funding for CME in rural and underserved areas. Introduced in the Senate on February 2, 2021, the Improving Access to Health Care in Rural and Underserved Areas Act (S. 201) would direct the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to award up to 100 grants for providing accredited CME to federally qualified health centers (FQHC) or rural health clinics (RHC).

“[The CME Coalition] appreciate[s] that you understand the importance of enhancing physician access to independent continuing education, especially as a means of combating rural health challenges and disparities, and your leadership is invaluable to us,” wrote CME Coalition Senior Advisor Andrew Rosenberg. “We look forward to your bill’s consideration and passage by the full Senate.”

IV. Support for Coalition Members in Dealing with COVID

The COVID-19 pandemic was devastating to traditional, in-person continuing medical education and many of the small companies that are the engine of CME innovation. Several of these companies are among the Coalition's membership. The CME Coalition spent considerable time on Capitol Hill in 2020 and 2021, educating members of Congress about the vital role of CME in our health care system — both COVID-related and more generally — and seeking additional funding and hospital spending flexibility as part of the various Congressional COVID relief packages.

In 2020 and 2021, the CME Coalition provided support and advice to some of our providers who struggled to survive the downturn in their business. For some of these companies and organizations, the Coalition provided specific help in understanding and accessing the federal assistance that was provided to small businesses as part of its COVID relief packages.

V. State Activity

In 2021, the CME Coalition kept a close eye on state efforts that would negatively impact CME, including in California, New Jersey and Maine. In California, for example, the Coalition monitored and advised members about a renewed law in California requiring CME events based in the state to include implicit bias training and has identified interest in other state legislatures for similar bills.

Additionally, the Coalition was effective in an advocacy campaign to encourage the Maine's Board of Pharmacy to abandon an ill-conceived limitation on physician payments to \$250. In a win for the Coalition, the State revised its 2019 gift ban proposal to *exclude* all payments related to CME, eliminating the proposed cap on speaker honoraria and associated expenses which could have had a chilling impact on physician participation.

VI. Programs and Presentations

Despite the pandemic's limitations, the CME Coalition managed to participate in numerous programs and presentations to offer insight to the broader CME stakeholder community around issues related to compliance and policy.

Other programs featuring Coalition presentations included the Alliance Industry Summit (AIS) and CBI's 19th Annual Medical Education and Grants Conference, among others.

PRIORITY ISSUES FOR 2022

As much as ever, the need for an organization to represent and promote the interests of CME among the nation's policymakers is crucial. And while there are new opportunities to explain the importance of continuing medical education to our healthcare system to the Administration, Congress, and in the states, skeptics of commercially supported CME remain active. At the core, most criticism of private sector support for CME has erroneously presumed that such funding constitutes an inherent conflict of interest and inappropriately influences the decisions of healthcare providers. Therefore, we must remain vigilant and continue to champion CME, promote its responsible use, and create opportunities

to enhance policy maker support for CME.

The CME Coalition has identified the following priority issues that it will be working on in 2022:

I. Congressional Advocacy

The CME Coalition will execute an ongoing campaign of Congressional advocacy highlighting the benefits of CME that will serve as a mechanism for identifying and securing congressional champions for our agenda including bills related to expanding funding for COVID and Long COVID related medical education and improving access to CME in rural and underserved areas

More broadly, in 2022, the Coalition will continue to advocate for dedicating programs dedicated to supporting the education of the nation's healthcare workforce. This includes, for example, advocating for funding for titles III and VII of the Public Health Service Act to facilitate continuing medical education initiatives related to COVID-19.

II. State Activity

The Coalition will continue to actively monitor state legislative action involving CME activities/events. We anticipate that the range of issues we will face on the state level will include a plethora of new laws and regulations aimed at requiring CME to address implicit biases in health care (e.g. Massachusetts, California, New York, Washington, Oregon), as well as the traditional lot of proposals aimed at limiting the provision of food and beverages at events.

While additional challenges we will face in the states are difficult to anticipate, the Coalition has a strong track record of effectively identifying and shaping state efforts that affect CME.

III. Stakeholder Engagement / Thought Leadership

The Coalition will continue to represent the CME "enterprise" and educate the broader stakeholder community on the value of CME, including engaging with the ACCME to ensure guidances are well understood and designed. Through appearances at national conferences, webinars, engagement with trade press, and other leadership opportunities, the Coalition will continue to work to provide a unified voice and elevate the status of the industry.

Before the establishment of the Coalition, there was little organized support for CME as an industry. However, after years of effective advocacy on the value of educating America's provider workforce, policymakers are increasingly looking to CME as part of the solution to the nation's most pressing

public health challenges — from educating opioid prescribers on the risk of addiction, to addressing drug pricing by filling knowledge gaps on biosimilars, to spreading best practices on the treatment of COVID-19. By continuing to position the Coalition as the preeminent thought leader on issues related to provider education, we hope to continue to position CME as essential to America’s public health system.

IV. CME and Health Disparities

In 2022, the CME Coalition is committed to highlighting the importance of addressing health disparities and of the role CME must play in addressing historical inequalities in care and outcomes. The Coalition will improve and update its [website](#) to add a section detailing the importance of CME in addressing health disparities that specifically enunciates CME members’ role in providing CME in this realm, addresses health care providers’ responsibilities and varying state requirements, and highlights key resources and suggested lesson plans. The new and improved site will also feature our members’ current involvement in this space.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

Since our founding, membership on the Steering Committee offers a seat at the table in determining all Coalition policy and significant decisions (which are determined by consensus). Steering Committee Members are invited to participate in regular monthly calls and populate our task force work groups.

As part of the Coalition, Steering Committee members are often invited to participate in policy meetings and briefing with Administration officials and Members of Congress as issues warrant. Further, Steering Committee Members receive frequent email updates regarding Coalition activities, CME policy developments and news reports related to CME. Members also have direct access to Coalition staff, which is housed at the Washington-based health policy firm of Thorn Run Partners, who are at their disposal for individualized regulatory and compliance counsel.

The CME Coalition also produces a continuous stream of useful materials for CME practitioners for use by its members, such as regularly updated ACCME Standards and Sunshine Act Compliance Guides, legal memoranda, FAQs, comments to CMS and ACCME, and press statements on CME related issues. As part of its role as the voice of CME, the CME Coalition is an oft-cited resource in both the trade and “Beltway” media on pressing issues of the day. All of this material may be found at the Coalition’s website, www.cmecoalition.org.

In addition to supporting the Coalition's extensive advocacy efforts with Washington policymakers and the broader health care provider community, many members also find considerable value in receiving Thorn Run Partners’ regularized health policy updates and analysis, which is provided as an additional benefit.

COST OF MEMBERSHIP

With a reasonable rate structure that strives to attract both corporate and non-profit members to our Steering Committee, we are confident that our members enjoy significant benefits of membership and see a real return on their commitment. Annual dues among Steering Committee members range from \$2,000 to \$15,000 depending upon a member's annual revenue or nonprofit status. The annual membership dues structure is as follows:

___ Annual revenue is under \$2.5M/per year — annual dues are set at \$2,000.

___ Annual revenue is above \$2.5M but under \$10M/per year — annual dues are set at \$7,500.

___ Annual revenue is above \$10M/year — annual dues are \$15,000

If you are interested in learning more about membership, please contact the Coalition's Executive Director Chris Lamond (clamond@thornrun.com) or Senior Advisor Andrew Rosenberg (arosenberg@thornrun.com), who can provide additional information on the next steps to secure your membership.