

ACCME to Assist Providers Addressing Prescription Drug Abuse Through Accredited CME and FDA REMS

Accredited CME included as contributor to national public health initiatives
Chicago, IL
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The Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME®) recognizes the importance of the federal government's 2011 Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Plan and the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS) for opioid medications. The ACCME applauds the government's inclusion of continuing health care education in these important public health initiatives.

The collaborative, multiagency Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Plan, released by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy on April 19, includes four major action areas. The first action area is education, including continuing education for health care professionals. The plan states: "Educating prescribers on substance abuse is critically important, because even brief interventions by primary care providers have proven effective in reducing or eliminating substance abuse in people who abuse drugs but are not yet addicted to them."

In concert with the White House plan, FDA announced a new REMS for all extended-release and long-acting opioid medications. A central component of the opioid REMS is an education program for prescribers. In its notification to manufacturers, FDA said it "expects that the training will be conducted by accredited, independent continuing medical education providers, to the extent practicable." FDA has given manufacturers 120 days to submit the draft REMS and expects the plan to roll out in early 2012.

"We are honored that the government views accredited CME as a strategic asset to public health and safety initiatives," said Murray Kopelow, MD, ACCME Chief Executive. "The overuse, underuse, and misuse of opioid analgesics are a major public health issue. We believe accredited CME can have a demonstrable impact on improving physician expertise and patient safety in this area. We will continue to work with FDA, drug manufacturers, and accredited providers, to ensure that accredited CME about REMS meets the ACCME's standards for independence and FDA expectations. As we move forward, we will be guided by our first priority — to promote public health and safety."

As the REMS plan evolves, the ACCME will develop guidance for the CME provider community to assist with their understanding and application of the process.

FDA information about the opioid REMS, including links to the FDA letter to manufacturers and frequently asked questions, is available [here](#) [1]. A replay of the April 20 FDA teleconference briefing is available by dialing (866) 463-4969.

[Download the White House ONDCP action plan](#) [2] and the [ONDCP news release](#) [3]. An archived video of the April 19 news briefing about the action plan is available [here](#) [4].

ACCME Interactions with Government

Through its interactions with government, the ACCME aims to fulfill its responsibilities of transparency and accountability, inform public officials about the value of accredited CME, and support national health care quality and safety initiatives.

In July 2010, [Dr. Kopelow made a presentation to an Advisory Committee of the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research](#) [5] during a meeting on REMS for extended-release and long-acting opioid analgesics. The ACCME was one of two organizations invited to present about continuing education; the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education also made

a presentation.

[Dr. Kopelow served as special advisor to the ONDCP from June through December 2009](#) [6]. He was one of several experts appointed by the ONDCP to help the office formulate long-term drug control policies that improve public health and safety. Dr. Kopelow's role was to encourage medical organizations, physicians and health care teams to integrate Screening and Brief Intervention (SBI) into health care practice. The ACCME has a long-standing, ongoing collaboration with the ONDCP.

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The Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education

The Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education is a not-for-profit organization based in Chicago that is responsible for accrediting U.S. institutions that offer continuing medical education through a voluntary, self-regulatory system. The ACCME also has a system for recognizing state medical societies as accreditors for local organizations offering CME.

The ACCME's mission is to identify, develop and promote standards for quality continuing medical education that improves health care for patients and their communities. There are currently approximately 2,200 accredited CME providers in the United States, whose educational activities draw more than 17 million health care practitioner participants annually.

The ACCME's member organizations include the American Board of Medical Specialties, the American Hospital Association, the American Medical Association, the Association of American Medical Colleges, the Association for Hospital Medical Education, the Council of Medical Specialty Societies and the Federation of State Medical Boards of the U.S. Inc.

For more information, visit www.accme.org [7].

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Links:

- [1] <http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/InformationbyDrugClass/ucm163647.htm>
- [2] <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/prescriptiondrugs/index.html>
- [3] <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/news/press11/041911.html>
- [4] <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/index.html>
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