

EDUCATION



WORKS!

By Dr. Steve Singer

Accredited Continuing Medical Education¹ (CME) can bring much-needed solutions to the complex challenges that your institution—and its physicians—face. At the intersection of physician licensure and certification requirements, hospital credentialing, quality improvement efforts and accountable care, CME can support institution-wide learning and change in dynamic ways. The question is... how? Here are nine steps to help you get the most value from CME.

1 “C-Suite, Meet Your Change-Agent.”

CME accreditation—that is, the ability to deliver CME activities to physicians and other health professionals, is awarded to your entire institution—not just your CME office (see sidebar “What is Accredited CME? Am I Accredited?” on next page). ACCME’s accreditation criteria provide your institution with a roadmap for doing effective education that promotes better practice and better care. Therefore, each of the departments and stakeholders within your system can view CME as their special tool to help address hospital priorities through education. Don’t know where to start? Begin by looking at communications coming from your institution’s executive office, such as internal communications to staff about strategic imperatives and hospital-wide initiatives, or external communications such as newsletters for patients and the public. Ask yourself, “How can CME help to address my institution’s and community’s healthcare priorities?”

2 Be an “Educational Consultant”

As a medical services professional, you’ve got your pulse on the processes that impact staff within your hospital. That perspective will help you understand how CME can meet your institution’s needs. Whether you work in CME or seek to partner with your CME department, take an active role in identifying who can benefit from learning and change initiatives, be they practitioners, care teams or entire clinical departments. Together with your CME colleagues, explore the ACCME website, as well as the CME “community

Nine ways to use continuing medical education (CME) as a dynamic, effective tool for change and improvement in your hospital.

of practice”² within your state and region to better understand how CME can help you achieve your goals. Capitalize on your department’s current expertise to facilitate the CME “education engine” throughout your system.

3 What Can Be CME? Think Outside the Box...

You may think of CME as lectures and “journal clubs” just for your docs, but accredited CME can also be one-on-one training, performance-improvement projects, patient safety initiatives, learning from teaching, team-based learning and innumerable other approaches.³ CME can focus on local issues and provide local solutions. Beyond sharing the latest innovations and insights from visiting experts, your grand rounds might get more traction by focusing those recurring educational sessions on chipping away at problems in practice and patient care at your institution. Think creatively about what CME is and can be. For examples visit www.accme.org.

4 Don’t Wait... Collaborate! Integrate! Delegate!

The ACCME accreditation review process rewards hospitals that integrate CME into other institutional processes and priorities. In fact, a longer term of accreditation (Accreditation with Commendation—six years) is awarded to institutions that enhance CME’s impact, for example, by collaborating with other departments and other organizations.⁴ You are perfectly positioned to recruit those strategic partners that can help you achieve change.

¹ In this article, we use the terms “accredited CME,” “CME,” and “accredited CME provider” to only refer to organizations, programs and activities within the ACCME accreditation system, which includes providers directly accredited by the ACCME, as well as those accredited by an ACCME-recognized state medical society.

² See “Perspectives” video interviews of CME providers at www.accme.org.

³ In fact, the ACCME, the American Nurses Credentialing Center, and the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education have collaborated on a Joint Accreditation process for institutions that develop multidisciplinary education for the healthcare team. For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/accme-joint-accreditation>.

⁴ For examples, see the “Accreditation Findings Based on the 2006 Criteria: A Compendium of Case Examples” at www.accme.org.

5 Get Your Docs Involved in Driving Change

Accredited CME that satisfies physician licensure and certification requirements can be an incentive to attract physician involvement in initiatives to improve care. CME can be applied to process improvement—from hand-offs in the coordination of care to enhancing communication skills among staff and patients. Bring physician leaders who are enthusiastic about quality and safety to your hospital's CME committee. If your physicians aren't yet engaged with quality and safety efforts, partner with CME to develop educational activities that teach docs how to be engaged and informed leaders.⁵

6 Join the Good Fight

Healthcare priorities, whether at the federal, state or local level, are low hanging fruit for your institution's CME focus. Consider working with your CME colleagues to align your hospital's CME mission with Medicare's "Triple Aim" and The Joint Commission's National Patient Safety Goals. Look to CME to construct educational activities and training

⁵ See <http://tinyurl.com/cme-quality>.

⁶ See ACCME video interview with The Joint Commission's SVP Dr. Paul Schyve at <http://tinyurl.com/accme-joint-commission>. Some of the Medical Staff Standards that may be addressed with CME include MS.12.01.01, MS.08.01.03, and MS.08.01.01.

around "meaningful use" incentives for electronic medical record adoption (HITECH), the FDA's Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies (REMS) for safe prescribing, pay-for-performance initiatives (e.g., PQRI), or even local efforts to reduce healthcare disparities. Learn more by seeking out local partners such as your state's Quality Improvement Organization, Area Health Extension Centers (AHECs) or local health departments.

7 Don't Reinvent the Wheel

Accredited CME can contribute synergistically to help address hospital and health professional credentialing needs. CME's paradigm of education, which focuses on changing problems in practice, is a ready-made solution for addressing The Joint Commission's Medical Staff Standards for continuing education and ongoing/focused professional practice evaluation.⁶ Bring CME to the table and see how you can help each other.

8 CME Can Just Say "Yes"

CME colleagues help transform the enthusiasm of medical staff leaders into educational activities. Planning forms and documentation requirements can be effective tools to manage the hospital's

many educational activities. But when these approaches discourage stakeholders from approaching CME as a partner-for-change, try boiling those interactions down to a few simple questions, such as, "What is the practice-based issue we want to address?" "Why does this issue exist?" "What do we want to change?" "How will we know that we've been effective?" and "Is our problem solved?" This familiar approach—the core of Plan-Do-Study-Act and root-cause analysis—should be an easy fit for CME, putting you and your stakeholders at ease.

9 Make Your Plans

Take advantage of educational resources provided by the ACCME, your state medical society and other CME/CE-focused groups to get informed—and inspired—by what other healthcare institutions are achieving through collaboration with CME as a "bridge to quality." Better yet, call a meeting of your own stakeholders to discuss how you can get even greater value from CME.



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What Is Accredited CME? Am I Accredited?

The majority of U.S. physicians participate in continuing education to fulfill the professional requirements of their licensing and/or certifying boards. The Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) oversees a national system for accrediting organizations that provide CME to physicians.

The ACCME's accreditation criteria and policies are built upon Shewhart and Deming's Plan-Do-Study-Act paradigm, valuing goal-setting, measurement and improvement. ACCME accreditation provides a framework that helps approximately 2,200 healthcare organizations use education to enhance physician practice and patient care. Institutions that are accredited within the ACCME system (including providers accredited by 46 ACCME-recognized state medical society accreditors) produce accredited CME using a variety of educational methods from case conferences to one-on-one training.

If your institution provides CME to physicians, you may be accredited directly by the ACCME, or by one of the ACCME-recognized state medical societies. Organizations without CME accreditation can provide CME through joint-sponsorship with an ACCME-accredited or state-accredited CME provider. To learn more, contact the ACCME (www.accme.org) or your state medical society.

