



## Program and Activity Reporting System (PARS) Survey Results

Launched in 2010, the ACCME Program and Activity Reporting System (PARS) is a Web-based portal designed to streamline and support the collection of program and activity data from ACCME-accredited continuing medical education (CME) providers. After submitting their 2010 activity and program data, ACCME-accredited providers were invited to complete an online survey asking for their feedback about their experience using PARS. (Please note that only ACCME-accredited providers, and not providers accredited by a state medical society, are required to use PARS for their data submission.)

We received survey responses from 222 (32%) out of 694 ACCME-accredited providers. Responses were received by all provider types accredited by the ACCME. The majority of providers reported that they found PARS easy to use and found the education and support resources helpful. Providers also shared suggestions for modifications to PARS and feedback about its overall benefits and challenges. Based on this feedback, we have implemented improvements to PARS. Educational resources, tutorials, and FAQs about PARS are available [here](#).

A summary of the key survey results follows.

### Entering Activity and Program Data into PARS

The survey asked providers how easy it was to enter CME activity and program data, on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being “very easy” and 10 being “very hard.” Providers were also asked how many CME activities they offered in 2010 and what methods they used to enter data into PARS.

**Table 1. Ease of Entering CME Activity Data into PARS**

# of activities	# of providers	Data Entry Method*			Ease of entering CME activity data									
		Web Fill Form	Tab-delimited upload	XML upload	1-Very Easy	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10-Very Hard
0-10	55	53	3	0	33	12	5	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
11-50	60	51	9	0	27	13	11	3	4	1	1	0	0	0
51-100	38	24	20	1	16	9	3	3	2	1	1	1	0	0
>100	63	30	44	4	20	8	15	5	4	2	3	3	2	0
Blank	6	3	1	0	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total:**</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

\*Provider may have used more than one method to enter data. \*\* Not all providers answered all of the survey questions.

**Table 2. Ease of Entering CME Program Data into PARS**

Number of activities	Number of providers	Ease of entering CME program data									
		1-Very Easy	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10-Very Hard
0-10	55	30	11	5	2	2	0	2	1	0	0
11-50	60	32	12	9	3	3	0	1	0	0	0
51-100	38	19	9	3	2	2	0	0	2	0	0
>100	63	33	9	11	3	2	1	1	1	1	0
Blank	6	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total:**</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

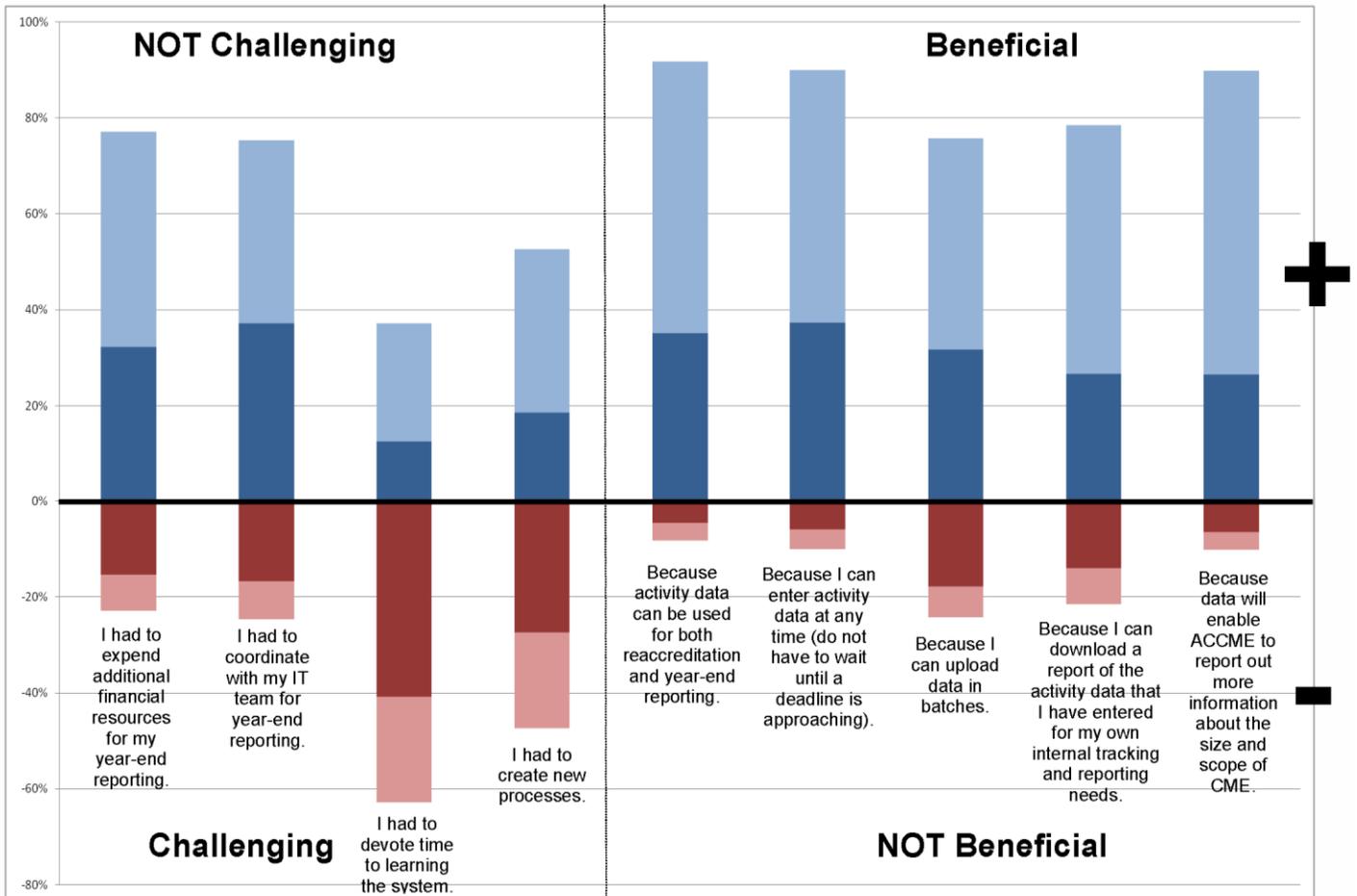
\*\* Not all providers answered all of the survey questions.

Although most providers reported that it was easy to enter CME activity data into the system, those providers that produce large numbers of activities more often reported that the system was slightly harder to use. Regardless of the number of activities they produced, providers responded that it was easy to enter overall program data through PARS.

### Benefits and Challenges of PARS

The survey asked accredited providers about the challenges they faced transitioning to PARS, as well as the benefits PARS brought to their organization and the CME enterprise.

**Figure 1. PARS Benefits and Challenges**



Overall, providers responded that they found PARS beneficial and the implementation challenges minimal. They reported that the greatest challenge was learning how to use PARS and creating new

processes. In their comments, many added that they expected these challenges when implementing a new system, and that they recognized the value of PARS. Asked about expending additional financial resources or coordinating with their IT staff, most providers responded that they did not find those aspects challenging. As for benefits, a majority of providers said that they found PARS helpful because their activity data will be used to meet both the reaccreditation and year-end reporting requirements. Providers also commented that PARS is valuable because it will enable the ACCME to report more information about the size and scope of the CME enterprise.

### **Comments from PARS Survey Respondents**

Here are a few comments about PARS from ACCME-accredited-providers.

- "Overall, I think the instruction and education provided for completing PARS was very cohesive and helpful."
- "As always, your customer service is outstanding and truly appreciated. Thank you for making my 'learning curve' a smooth one."
- "PARS was so user friendly I did not need any assistance using it or completing my annual report."
- "[PARS] made the annual report submission process very smooth and straightforward."
- "Can the system be adjusted to allow for an activity already entered in a reporting year to be updated and saved in the next reporting year, without losing the data from the original reporting year? As entering all of the regularly scheduled series data took quite a few hours, this would be especially helpful as it would take considerably less time to update each than totally reenter all of the information every year." [This improvement has been implemented. Please see this [FAQ](#).]
- "Providers should be allowed to be able to enter activities that occur in different locations that have the same names." [This improvement has been implemented. Please see this [FAQ](#).]
- "It took me a long time to individually delete each item. I recommend adding a batch delete just like your upload. That would have saved me a tremendous amount of time." [This improvement has been implemented. Please see this [FAQ](#).]
- "We are going to design our regularly scheduled series audit process to mirror PARS and we're going to try to enter activities as they occur. This has proved challenging because of how busy we are."
- "We were required to upload all of the activities in PARS for [our] reaccreditation term [deadline]. Getting this accomplished was a very arduous task, but I have to admit, in the long-run and going forward PARS will be an exceptional help in keeping track of our CME activities and keeping the reporting data in order. I have implemented new practices of entering the data when the CME activity is completed so that I will have little to do when the 2011 ACCME Annual Report is due."
- "I think the use of PARS will result in the ACCME being better able to monitor and accurately report on the activities of the providers."
- "[PARS] saves time, money, trees, and is more productive for the provider as well as ACCME. Made it very easy to get the job done quickly, thus allowing ACCME to avoid the additional cost of follow-up. A WIN, WIN!"