

INFORMATION ON CONTINUING COMPETENCE

The California Board of Podiatric Medicine (Board) strives to provide effective licensing and enforcement of podiatric physicians & surgeons as a means to protect the public from any unfit and incompetent doctors practicing in this highly specialized field.

Through the years these efforts have been driven by a number of unique initiatives advanced by the Board that have sought not simply to maintain entry level standards for physicians, but also to elevate professional competency standards, reduce medical error and prevent patient harm.

One of the ways the Board accomplishes its mission objectives is by calling for all licensed doctors of podiatric medicine (DPMs) to demonstrate compliance with Board-mandated continuing competency requirements.

The California Board of Podiatric Medicine has been in the vanguard of consumer protection efforts and is the only doctor-licensing board in the country to champion, implement and adopt such a program over and above continuing medical education alone.

The Law

Section 2496 of the State Medical Practice Act authorizes the Board to adopt regulations to ensure the “continuing competence of persons licensed to practice podiatric medicine,” and specifies the continuing competence requirements for DPMs at each license renewal period by certifying compliance with one of the following pathways under penalty of perjury, and subject to Board audit:

1. passage of an exam administered by the board.ⁱ
2. passage of an exam administered by an approved specialty board.ⁱ
3. current diplomate, eligible, or qualified status with an approved specialty board.ⁱ
4. recertification by an approved specialty board.ⁱ
5. completion of an approved residency/fellowship.ⁱ
6. granting/renewing health care facility privileges.ⁱⁱ
7. successful completion of an extended course of study approved by the board.ⁱⁱ
8. passage of Part III exam administered by the National Boards.ⁱ

The eight pathways for demonstrating continuing competence listed above are in addition to the Board’s regulations requiring each licensee to complete at least fifty (50) units of approved continuing medical education during each 2-year license period.

At least twelve units must be in subjects related to the lower extremity muscular skeletal system. ***All courses must be scientific in content, and relate directly to patient care.***

Licensees must maintain records of continuing education course attendance for a minimum of 4 years, in the event of an audit.

Acceptable Courses for Credit

The following courses are approved for continuing medical education credit, provided they are scientific in content and relate directly to patient care:

- 1) Programs approved by the [California Podiatric Medical Association](#) or the [American Podiatric Medical Association](#) and their affiliated organizations
- 2) Programs approved for Category 1 credit of the [American Medical Association](#), the [California Medical Association](#), or their affiliated organizations, and programs approved by the [American Osteopathic Association](#), [Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons of California](#), or their affiliated organizations;
- 3) Programs offered by approved colleges or schools of podiatric medicine, medicine, and osteopathic medicine;
- 4) Completion of an approved residency or fellowship program (credited for fifty hours of continuing medical education).

Any programs not qualifying under items 1-4 above may be approved by the Board of Podiatric Medicine following submission of an application for approval. Courses submitted for Board approval must meet several criteria including documentation that the course material is scientific in content and directly related to patient care. ***Courses in other subjects such as investments, tax planning, practice management, and risk management are not approved for credit.***

Note: A maximum of one-third of continuing education hours may be satisfied by teaching courses offered by an approved continuing education provider.

Waivers

The Board may temporarily waive these requirements. A waiver may be granted only for reasons of health, military service, or undue hardship. A waiver must be submitted on an approved form provided by the Board.

A temporary waiver permits an additional two-year license period for completion of deficient requirements, which must be documented at the following license renewal. If these are not completed, a license renewal will not be granted.

Random Audit

The Board of Podiatric Medicine annually audits a random sample of DPMs for compliance. Licensees selected for audit must provide documentation of compliance. Licensees are therefore required maintain records of continuing education course attendance for a minimum of 4 years.

ⁱ Within the past 10 years

ⁱⁱ Within the past 5 years