

ACCREDITATION COUNCIL FOR CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION (ACCME) ESSENTIALS FOR CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION (CME) ACTIVITIES:

A SUMMARY

Continuing Medical Education consists of educational activities which serve to maintain, develop, or increase the knowledge, skills, and professional performance and relationships that a physician uses to provide services for patients, the public, or the profession. The content of CME is that body of knowledge and skills generally recognized and accepted by the profession as within the basic medical sciences, the discipline of clinical medicine, and the provision of health care to the public.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT: Simply, each Course Director, with his/her Program Committee, must identify the needs that the program addresses. The methods or process used to identify the need must be explained and documented. The Accreditation Council cites the following as examples of acceptable methods to identify needs: Survey of target audience, self-assessment tests, patient care audit/QA reports, mortality/morbidity statistics, peer reviewed abstracts, faculty perception, and/or consensus of experts. These examples give a clear idea of needs assessment.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES: The Program Director and Committee can then establish **OBJECTIVES** consistent with, and reflecting those needs. The **OBJECTIVES** or **GOALS** must be explicit so that, when the program is evaluated, we can determine whether these **OBJECTIVES** were in fact achieved, and whether the activity is likely to result in improved patient care. Also, a summary or statement of the **OBJECTIVES** must be included in any published announcement of the program.

EDUCATIONAL DESIGN: The **PROGRAM DESIGN** for any CME activity must be appropriate for achieving the objectives. For example, a hands-on workshop might be appropriate in one case; a lecture format might be appropriate in another; slides, videotape or electronic polling devices might be considered in still other cases. However, interaction should always be maximized.

EVALUATION: Finally, an **EVALUATION** system must be designed to determine whether the objectives of the program are met. Also, the ACCME and Weill Cornell requires that the conclusions of the evaluation actually be utilized for improved performance in the future. The Program Director is asked to return the program evaluations with a summary and analysis to the CME office and to share these with faculty from the program.

The CME office, according to Accreditation regulations, includes these essentials in the application for CME Credit Approval, since we must have documentation in our files that each of these steps has been undertaken satisfactorily. Again, these are the "**ESSENTIALS**" that the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education determined are the minimum standards an activity must satisfy to qualify for CME credit approval.