**Section 1350.116 Continuing Education**

a) Continuing Education (CE) Requirements

1) Beginning with the March 2, 2020 renewal period, all licensed physician assistants shall complete 50 hours of approved CE per 2-year license renewal cycle.

2) All CE must be completed in the 24 months preceding expiration of the license.

3) A renewal applicant shall not be required to comply with CE requirements for the first renewal of an Illinois license.

4) Physician assistants licensed in Illinois but residing and practicing in other states shall comply with the CE requirements set forth in this Section.

5) CE hours used to satisfy the CE requirements of another jurisdiction may be applied to fulfill the CE requirements of the State of Illinois pursuant to subsection (e).

b) CE hours shall be earned by, but not limited to, verified attendance (e.g., certificate of attendance or certificate of completion) at, or participation in, a program or course (program) as follows:

1) CE hours shall be earned as follows:

A) A minimum of 25 hours of required CEs must be earned in Category 1 CMEs as determined by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants; and

B) 25 credit hours of required CEs can be Category 1, Category 2 or a combination of both.

2) Category 1 CME

A) Regular. Programs offered by sponsors set forth in subsection (c)(1);

B) Certifications Programs. Certification and recertification programs that are preapproved (sponsored) by the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) for a maximum number of Category 1 credits.

C) Performance Improvements (PI-CME). Programs that offer a systematic approach to planning, implementing, and assessing quality improvement in the clinical practice setting.

D) Self-assessment. Programs that focus on the process of conducting a systematic review of one's own performance, knowledge base or skill set to improve future performance, expand knowledge or hone skills. Self-Assessment CME is intended primarily to address physician assistant competencies related to knowledge, patient care, and practice-based learning and improvement.

3) Category 2 CE is any educational activity that relates to medicine, patient care or the role of the physician assistant that has not been designated for Category 1 credit.

c) Approved CE Sponsors and Programs

1) Sponsor, as used in this Section shall mean:

A) American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP);

B) American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA);

C) American Medical Association (AMA) (providers accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME));

D) American Osteopathic Association (AOA); or

E) Any other accredited school, college or university, State agency or association approved by the Department.

2) All programs shall:

A) Contribute to the advancement, extension and enhancement of the professional skills and scientific knowledge of the licensee in the profession of physician assistants;

B) Foster the enhancement the physician assistant profession and values;

C) Be developed and presented by persons with education and/or experience in the subject matter of the program;

D) Specify the course objectives, course content and teaching methods to be used; and

E) Specify the number of CE hours that may be applied to fulfilling the Illinois CE requirements for license renewal.

3) Each CE program shall provide a mechanism for evaluation of the program and instructor by the participants. The evaluation may be completed on-site immediately following the program/presentation, or an evaluation questionnaire may be distributed to participants to be completed and returned by mail. The sponsor and instructor, together, shall review the evaluation outcome and revise subsequent programs accordingly.

4) A sponsor approved pursuant to subsection (c)(1) may subcontract with individuals or organizations to provide approved programs. All advertising, promotional materials and certificates of attendance must identify the approved sponsor. The presenter of the program may also be identified but should be identified as a presenter. When an approved sponsor subcontracts with a presenter, the sponsor retains all responsibility for monitoring attendance, providing certificates of attendance and ensuring the program meets all of the criteria established by the Act and this Part, including the maintenance of records.

5) Certification of Attendance. It shall be the responsibility of a sponsor to provide each participant in a program with a certificate of attendance or participation. The sponsor's certificate of attendance shall contain:

A) The sponsor's name and, if applicable, sponsor approval number;

B) The name of the participant;

C) A brief statement of the subject matter;

D) The number of hours attended in each program;

E) The date and place of the program; and

F) The signature of the sponsor.

6) The sponsor shall maintain attendance records for not less than 5 years.

7) The sponsor shall be responsible for assuring that no renewal applicant will receive CE credit for time not actually spent attending the program.

8) Upon the failure of a sponsor to comply with any of the requirements of this subsection (c), the Division, after notice to the sponsor and hearing before and recommendation by the Board (see 68 Ill. Adm. Code 1110), shall thereafter refuse to accept for CE attendance at or participation in any of that sponsor's CE programs until the Division receives assurances of compliance with this Section.

9) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Section, the Division or Board may evaluate any sponsor of any approved CE program at any time to ensure compliance with requirements of this Section.

d) Certification of Compliance with CE Requirements

1) Each renewal applicant shall certify, on the renewal application, full compliance with the CE requirements set forth in subsections (a) and (b).

2) The Division may require additional evidence demonstrating compliance with the CE requirements (e.g., certificates of attendance). This additional evidence shall be required in the context of the Division's random audit. It is the responsibility of each renewal applicant to retain or otherwise produce evidence of compliance.

3) When there appears to be a lack of compliance with CE requirements, an applicant shall be notified in writing and may request an interview with the Board. At that time the Board may recommend that steps be taken to begin formal disciplinary proceedings as required by Section 10-65 of the Illinois Administrative Procedure Act [5 ILCS 100].

e) Continuing Education Earned in Other Jurisdictions

1) If a licensee has earned CE hours offered in another jurisdiction not given by an approved sponsor for which the licensee will be claiming credit toward full compliance in Illinois, the applicant shall submit an individual program approval request form, along with a $25 processing fee, prior to participation in the program or within 90 days prior to expiration of the license. The Board shall review and recommend approval or disapproval of the program using the criteria set forth in subsection (c)(3).

2) If a licensee fails to submit an out-of-state CE approval form within the required time frame, late approval may be obtained by submitting the approval request with the $25 processing fee plus a late fee of $50 per CE hour, not to exceed $300. The Board shall review and recommend approval or disapproval of the program using the criteria set forth in subsection (c)(3).

f) Waiver of CE Requirements

1) Any renewal applicant seeking renewal of a license without having fully complied with these CE requirements shall file with the Division a renewal application, along with the required fee set forth in Section 1350.25(b), an affidavit setting forth the facts concerning noncompliance and a request for waiver of the CE requirements on the basis of these facts. A request for waiver shall be made prior to the renewal date. If the Division, upon the written recommendation of the Board, finds from the affidavit or any other evidence submitted that good cause has been shown for granting a waiver, the Division will waive enforcement of CE requirements for the renewal period for which the applicant has applied.

2) Good cause shall be determined on an individual basis by the Board and be defined as an inability to devote sufficient hours to fulfilling the CE requirements during the applicable prerenewal period because of:

A) Full-time service in the Armed Forces of the United States during a substantial part of the prerenewal period;

B) An incapacitating illness documented by a statement from a currently licensed health care provider;

C) A physical inability to access the sites of approved programs documented by a currently licensed health care provider; or

D) Any other similar extenuating circumstances.

3) When the licensee is requesting a waiver due to physical or mental illness or incapacity, the licensee shall provide a current fitness to practice statement from a currently licensed health care provider familiar with the licensee's medical history.

4) Any renewal applicant who, prior to the expiration date of the license, submits a request for a waiver, in whole or in part, pursuant to the provisions of this Section shall be deemed to be in good standing until the final decision on the application is made by the Division.

(Source: Former Section 1350.116 renumbered to Section 1350.117; new Section 1350.116 adopted at 44 Ill. Reg. 2519, effective January 31, 2020)