

Definition of CME

The Definition of Continuing Medical Education (OSMA , 00-03-A)

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.

A broad definition of CME, such as the one found above, recognizes that all continuing educational activities which assist physicians in carrying out their professional responsibilities more effectively and efficiently are CME. A course in management would be appropriate CME for physicians responsible for managing a health care facility; a course in educational methodology would be appropriate CME for physicians teaching in a medical school; a course in practice management would be appropriate CME for practitioners interested in providing better service to patients.

Not all continuing educational activities which physicians may engage in however, are CME. Physicians may participate in worthwhile continuing educational activities which are not related directly to their professional work and these activities are not CME. Continuing educational activities which respond to a physician's non-professional education need or interest, such as personal financial planning, appreciation of literature or music, are not CME.

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