

# Vermont M.D. License Renewal Now Requires CME

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Beginning at the start of the current licensing cycle (December 1, 2012 – November 30, 2014), physicians licensed by the Vermont Board of Medical Practice must complete 30 hours of continuing medical education in each two-year license period in order to be eligible to renew for the succeeding license period. The new requirement is based upon a change to Vermont law, which required the Board to adopt rules mandating CME. The Board has communicated this new requirement through a number of emails, announcements on our web page, and via organizations such as the Vermont Medical Society. The Board's staff continues to hear questions from physicians about the new requirement, so we have collected questions and answers to share here.



## ***1. Where do I find the official rules?***

The rules are available on the Board's website, which you can reach by clicking [here](#).

## ***2. To whom does the new requirement apply?***

These requirements apply to physician licensees of the Vermont Board of Medical Practice. They do not apply to other professions licensed by the Board.

## ***3. What is the overall requirement?***

Thirty hours of AMA Physician's Recognition Award Category 1 Credit™ (AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™).

## ***4. What are the subject requirements?***

The basic requirement is that the CME be designed to update knowledge and skills in the physician's own specialties and fields for which patient referrals may be appropriate. The requirement is not to be read narrowly; it is acknowledged that training in many fields may be reasonably related to one's own area of practice.

In addition, there are two subject-specific requirements, one that applies to every licensee and one that applies only to those licensees who hold or who have applied for a

DEA number. The requirement for each topic is at least one hour on the specific subject, and in each instance it's not an additional hour. Subject-specific activities count toward the 30-hour requirement.

The first required subject is hospice, palliative care, and pain management services. This requirement comes directly from the statute. There is no specific course that must be taken; the requirement is simply that at least one hour of the 30 must be on one of those topics, or a combination thereof. The other requirement, which is triggered by having a DEA number to prescribe controlled substances, is for at least one hour on safe and effective prescribing of controlled substances. You may devote more than one hour to either of the special subjects; the requirement for one hour is a minimum amount of training on those subjects.

## ***5. What is the period during which I must complete CME?***

The period is the licensing cycle, which is always a two-year period beginning on December 1 of an even year and ending on November 30 two years later. The initial period to complete the required CME is December 1, 2012 to November 30, 2014, with participation in qualifying activity being a prerequisite for renewal of a license for the period December 1, 2014 to November 30, 2016. For this initial cycle only, CME completed during the six-month period preceding December 1, 2012 will be allowed to count toward the 30-hour requirement.

## ***6. How are hours reported?***

The requirement will be for the licensee to certify that he or she has satisfied the CME requirements at the time when the renewal application is submitted. It will not be necessary to submit certificates of completion at that time. However, the rules provide that licensees are subject to being audited and, if selected for audit, can be required to submit documentation for up to four years. At present (July 2013), the Board does not offer licensees the means to track and store documentation, but we are working with our software consultant and expect to offer that capability by late 2013 or early 2014. Licensees will be able to record information about their CME activities and upload documentation. We will notify everyone when that is available.

## ***7. What if I am not licensed for the entire two-year period?***

If you were newly licensed in Vermont for the first time as an M.D. during the 2012 to 2014 licensing period, your requirement will depend on when your license was issued. CME will not be a requirement for your first renewal if your first license was issued after December 1, 2013.



If licensed for the first time before December 1, 2013, your requirement will be 15 hours of qualifying CME. Those with a requirement for 15 hours must satisfy the requirement for at least one hour of training on hospice, palliative care, and pain management services. In addition, those with a DEA number must satisfy the requirement for at least one hour of training on safe and effective prescribing of controlled substances.

***8. What if a physician has not completed CME in time to renew?***

A physician who has not completed required CME in time to renew his or her license will be able to renew so long as an acceptable make-up plan is filed along with the renewal application. A make-up plan must include a list of the activities that the physician plans to complete in order to meet requirements in the first 120 days of the license period. The rules include additional procedures for licensees who fail to complete a make-up plan.

***9. What if I'm in the military and unable to complete CME because of a deployment?***

There is a special rule for licensees who are subject to a military deployment. If the deployment lasts for more than a full year during a licensing cycle, the licensee is not required to complete CME during that cycle. If the mobilization is for less than a year during the license period, then the physician is subject to the 15-hour requirement (see #7).

***10. Do physicians earn credit by being faculty for CME training?***

Yes. The AMA PRA program allows two credits for each hour presenting courses that qualify for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™. The Board follows the same standard.

***11. I'm not sure if a course meets the requirements for subject-specific training. Will the Board approve courses in advance?***

Yes, the Board will advise physicians if particular courses meet the subject-specific requirements. Contact by email is recommended.

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