

ACCME Reminds Providers about Deadline for Corporate Structure Changes, Commercial Support Policies, and Announces New Standard Accreditation Interview Format

Chicago, August 11, 2009 -- The Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) has several reminders for accredited providers and an announcement about a new standard accreditation interview format for ACCME-accredited providers.

August 2009 Deadline Here for Any Necessary Corporate Structure Changes

Two years ago, at its July 2007 meeting, the ACCME Board of Directors approved a change to the definition of a commercial interest so that any entity "producing, marketing, re-selling, or distributing health care goods or services consumed by, or used on, patients" was ineligible from being accredited or from serving as a non-accredited joint sponsor of CME. With that modification of the definition came an explicit expectation that accredited providers would examine their organizational structure to ensure they (or any parent organization) did not meet the definition of a commercial interest. The ACCME set a deadline of **August 2009** for required organizational changes or withdrawal from accreditation.

Guidance to accredited providers was provided via the ACCME's website:

[Ask ACCME SCS1: Independence](#)

To make certain that all necessary changes have been made, the ACCME asks that all accredited providers review the attached letter and complete a brief self-assessment for your own internal use. This self-assessment tool will ensure that the ACCME and accredited providers have sufficiently addressed the 2007 modification to the definition of commercial interest. There is no need to contact the ACCME or submit your answers to the self-assessment tool, unless you believe your organization fits the ACCME's definition of a commercial interest. Please read this [letter from Dr. Kopelow](#) for more information and instructions.

Check Your Commercial Support Policies and Agreements

In a statement issued June 2008, the ACCME Board of Directors reiterated that while CME providers can receive commercial support from industry, they "*cannot receive guidance, either nuanced or direct, on the content of the activity or on who should deliver that content.*" During recent accreditation review processes, the ACCME has noticed that in a few cases, providers' policies and written agreements for commercial support include potentially outdated language that may put them at risk of noncompliance with the ACCME Standards for Commercial SupportSM. For more information, please read the [Notice about Keeping Your Policies and Procedures Current](#).

New Standard Format for Accreditation Interviews

To reduce the expenses associated with the accreditation interviews for accredited providers, the ACCME will begin using teleconference calls as the standard format beginning with the March 2010 decision cycle. From some providers, this represents an immediate 20% reduction in the cost of the accreditation process. The ACCME has relied upon the teleconference interview format for several years with no variance in accreditation outcomes from the other, more traditional formats. Accredited providers and the ACCME will continue to have the option of using the other interview formats – Onsite, Televideo, and Face-to-face – if circumstances warrant it. As has always been the case, the ACCME will work with providers to schedule interviews at times that are appropriate to the accreditation deadlines. In general, interviews are confirmed approximately three months prior to the expiration of the current accreditation term. For questions about the accreditation interview format or process, please contact Erica Hubbard, ACCME's Survey Services Coordinator (ehubbard@accme.org).

For general questions regarding these reminders/announcements, please contact the ACCME at postmaster@ACCME.org.

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