

## Illinois Licensing and Continuing Medical Education

The system of medicine in the US requires physicians be licensed in the state or states where they practice. In Illinois, such licensing is governed by the Department of Finance and Professional Regulation. The Illinois Medical Licensing Act provides the legislated rules for medical and chiropractic physicians. The next renewal date for all physicians licensed to practice medicine in the state of Illinois is July 2008.

All physicians should be aware of this licensing process. The current, pre-renewal period is July 1, 2005 through July 31, 2008 (the 36 months preceding July 31 in the year of renewal). A major amendment to the licensing act occurred in 1996 adding a requirement for 150 hours of CME during the three year pre-renewal period. According to the regulations, CME hours should be earned in formal learning (minimum of 60 hours required) and up to 90 hours may be obtained in informal CME.

Fortunately a system exists for providing CME to physicians. It centers on *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™* made available through a network of approved providers. This network is accredited by the Accreditation Council for CME (ACCME). The recognition of accredited programs is accomplished directly through this body or through recognized state medical societies.

Language amended in 2005 changed, among other items, the role of the AMA PRA certificate. The Department of Finance and Professional Regulation will accept the AMA PRA certificate as documentation of compliance with the 150 CME hours set forth in the act; however, the hours shall be earned consistently with the pre-renewal period. This additional language makes using the AMA PRA as proof of the 150 credits especially difficult as the three year period for both licensing and the PRA seldom overlap.

Organizations that provide certified activities are required to keep a record of credits awarded for a minimum of six years. While it is the physician's

responsibility to maintain their licensing requirements, many CME providers will assist by providing tracking systems and transcript repositories. These systems can be well worth any time and effort required of the physician, especially if the individual is selected for audit. Per the state licensing rules, random audits will be conducted to verify compliance with the CME requirements. Historically, these audits have represented about eight percent of the state's physicians.

In Illinois, the Illinois State Medical Society (ISMS) is recognized to accredit intrastate sponsors of CME. Carle Foundation Hospital is accredited by the ISMS to provide CME. The Carle CME office received a maximum accreditation term of four years during their last site survey; the next on-site survey will occur in 2010.

To view the medical act and rules in their entirety log onto the IDPR website at  
<http://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/068/06801285sections.html>

To view the AMA rules relative to CME log onto the AMA website at  
<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/15889.html>

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