

CPD in Focus

SUMMER 2019

HIGHLIGHTS FROM NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MEETINGS

TWO- AND THREE-CREDIT-PER-HOUR CERTIFICATION PILOT EVALUATION

In January 2018 the CPD Department at the CFPC began working with six pilot sites to determine whether university CPD offices accredited by the Committee on Accreditation of Continuing Medical Education (CACME) and CFPC Chapters have the capacity to certify two- and three-credit-per-hour CPD programs. Prior to the launch of the pilot only the CFPC National Office could certify programs seeking two- or three-credit-per-hour certification. At the pilot's inception five university CPD sites and one CFPC provincial Chapter were participating; now four university CPD sites are still involved. The Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada's CPD Research Subcommittee is overseeing the evaluation of the pilot project, which consists of:

- Submissions undergoing quality assurance by CFPC staff
- Pilot site interviews at six months and at the end of the pilot
- Pilot site surveys at six months and at the end of the pilot

The National Committee on Continuing Professional Development (NCCPD) has approved the extension of the pilot with existing sites until October 2019 pending the review of an 18-month evaluation. It has also recommended that CFPC staff administering the pilot be represented in the next stages of the evaluation.

POLICY UPDATE FOR WEBINARS AND OTHER NATIONALLY CERTIFIED REGULARLY SCHEDULED ONLINE ACTIVITIES

The NCCPD approved that online webinar series and other regularly scheduled online series will be eligible for certification without the requirement for full content review. These activities will be reviewed in a similar fashion to live conferences and hospital or clinical rounds. The review will focus on the process the scientific planning committee uses to determine learner needs, select topics, manage conflict of interest (COI) disclosure, and select speakers. Mainpro+® reviewers will reserve the right to request content for review if there are concerns regarding topics selected or relationships with program sponsors.

The CERT+ platform and *Mainpro+ Certification Standards* will be updated to accommodate this change in policy. The changes are expected to take effect in fall 2019.

NEW MARKETING STATEMENTS FOR MAINPRO+ CERTIFIED ACTIVITIES

To support the promotion of Mainpro+ certified activities the NCCPD approved two marketing statements to be used when advertising these activities. These marketing statements may be used in save-the-date notifications, program brochures, invitations, and social media advertising once an activity has received full Mainpro+ certification. The marketing statements do not replace the official Mainpro+ certification statements, which must be used in the full printed/online program and on certificates of attendance. The marketing statements are:

- This [program/conference/activity/event] has been certified for up to [insert # of credits] Mainpro+® credits
- Earn up to [insert # of credits] certified Mainpro+® credits

Similar informal marketing statements **cannot be used** for programs that refer to the reciprocal agreements between the CFPC and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Only the full certification statements may be used to describe the certification of these programs.

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REVISIONS TO THE COI SUBMISSION AND REVIEW PROCESS

The Mainpro+ evaluation report identified that program providers found some administrative elements of the Mainpro+ certification process to be barriers to submitting activities for review. As a result of this feedback from providers, CFPC staff proposed a change to the CERT+ application and review process aimed at reducing the administrative burden of the Mainpro+ certification process. CFPC staff proposed removing the review of speaker, facilitator, moderator, and author COI forms from the CERT+ certification and ethical review submission requirements, and the NCCPD approved this change.

Program providers will continue to be required to collect and review the COI forms for these individuals and more emphasis will be placed on the scientific planning committee's process for the review of COI and the mitigation of bias as well as how this is communicated to learners. The CERT+ application form will be updated to include questions that require the scientific planning committee to describe the process for reviewing COI and mitigating bias. The CFPC three-slide/step COI process remains in place and templates of these slides will continue to be submitted and reviewed. The mitigation of bias slide must be completed at the time of submission outlining the process the scientific planning committee used.

The CFPC is updating the document *Quick Tips: Identification and Management of Conflicts of Interest and Transparency to Learners* to support program providers in improving bias mitigation. Additionally, further training will be provided for Mainpro+ program reviewers and for CFPC National Office and Chapter staff to help them better coach providers and to evaluate the proposed bias mitigation strategies effectively. The changes to the COI review requirements will be implemented in fall 2019.

The NCCPD also approved a new COI form. It is more closely aligned with that of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (Royal College) and has been updated to provide greater clarity on the types of relationships that should be disclosed. The primary changes in the form are the simplification of the types of relationships that must be disclosed and the inclusion of Element 3 from the National Standard for Support of Accredited CPD Activities. The new form is available on the CFPC [website](#); however, the CFPC will continue to accept submissions using the old COI form until March 2020 to give providers time to update their processes and materials.

RESTRICTIONS AFFECTING THE EDUCATIONAL ROLE OF HEALTH CARE/PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES AT MAINPRO+ CERTIFIED ACTIVITIES

The NCCPD has approved an update to the *Mainpro+ Certification Standards* to improve its alignment with the *National Standard for Support of Accredited CPD Activities* and ensure that Mainpro+ certified activities remain free from potential bias. The revision updates the following section of the *Mainpro+ Certification Standards* (April 2018, page 12):

*Representatives of a commercial interest (e.g., pharmaceutical company, medical device company, etc.) cannot assume the role of a facilitator, speaker, and/or instructor for any Mainpro+ certified program. **The only exception is where a demonstration of a product or device is an essential component of the educational event, and no physician or other health care professional is qualified to perform this role.** This type of participation must be rationalized by scientific planning committee members, outlined in the initial certification application, and be in no way related to product or device promotion or sales.*

This newly approved policy is:

*Representatives of a commercial interest (e.g., pharmaceutical company, medical cannabis producer, medical device company) cannot assume the role of a facilitator, speaker, and/or instructor for any Mainpro+ certified program **under any circumstances.***

This new policy will appear in the revised *Mainpro+ Certification Standards* when it is released in fall 2019.

DEFINITION OF AN ELIGIBLE CPD PROVIDER

A CPD provider organization is an organization that assumes the responsibility and accountability for the development, delivery, and evaluation of CFPC-certified CPD activities. The organization may form a scientific planning committee to conduct this work.

The NCCPD approved that CPD provider organizations that meet the following criteria may submit applications to the CFPC and its Chapters for review and the awarding of Mainpro+ credits for CPD activities they develop. University CPD offices accredited by the CACME may also certify activities in which they have substantial involvement. CPD provider organizations must adhere to all Mainpro+ certification standards, which include incorporating the substantial input of CFPC members in all aspects of the planning process.

Eligible CPD provider organizations for Mainpro+ one-credit-per-hour activities:

- Not-for-profit physician organizations, as defined by the National Standard (see the definition of a not-for-profit physician organization below); this includes organizations whose health professional membership includes, but is not restricted to, physicians
- Disease-oriented patient advocacy organizations
- Government departments and agencies with an interest in and responsibility for health care
- Organizations and professional associations with an interest in and responsibility for health care that do not meet the definition of a health care/pharmaceutical Industry (HPI) commercial interest
- Medical education companies (including online educators, publishers, and simulation companies) that are not subsidiaries of or in the employ of an HPI commercial interest, nor are developing an activity on behalf or under the direction of an HPI commercial interest
- A scientific planning committee composed of two or more CFPC members or a single CFPC member in affiliation with one or more other health care providers for the specific purpose of creating CPD activities

Eligible CPD provider organizations for Mainpro+ two- and three-credit-per-hour activities:

- Not-for-profit physician organizations, as defined by the National Standard (see below); this includes organizations whose health professional membership includes, but is not restricted to, physicians
- Collaboration required: The following must develop and submit activities for certification in collaboration with a not-for-profit physician organization, as defined by the National Standard: disease-oriented patient advocacy organizations; government departments and agencies; and organizations, professional associations, and medical education companies as stipulated in the definition above

Not eligible to act as a CPD provider organization for Mainpro+ certified activities:

- HPI commercial interests are not eligible CPD providers, nor is a subsidiary of an HPI commercial interest, nor is an organization developing an activity on behalf of or under the direction of an HPI commercial interest

The NCCPD also approved the following accompanying definitions to further clarify eligible and ineligible organizations.

HPI commercial interest:

- A for-profit entity that develops, produces, markets, re-sells, or distributes drugs, devices, products, or other health care goods, services, or therapies that may be prescribed to patients or ordered by doctors for the diagnosis, treatment, monitoring, management, or palliation of health conditions

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- » Pharmaceutical companies
- » Medical device companies
- » Medical and surgical supply companies
- » Producers of non-prescription health care products
- » Nutrition companies (e.g., infant formula, nutritional supplements)
- » Pharmacies; diet, fitness, and weight-loss companies; prosthetic and orthotic stores; hearing-test centres; home care companies; etc.
- » Clinical services that are owned or controlled by any of the above entities

Not-for-profit physician organization:

- A not-for-profit group of health professionals with a formal governance structure, accountable to and serving, among others, its affiliated physician members through any or all of these activities:
 - » CPD
 - » Provision of health care
 - » Research

This definition includes (but is not limited to):

- » Faculties of medicine
- » Hospital departments or divisions
- » Medical societies
- » Medical associations
- » Medical academies
- » Physician research organizations
- » Physician clinics
- » Health authorities not linked to government agencies
- » Canadian provincial medical regulatory authorities

Medical education company:

- An entity (either for profit or not for profit) whose primary business is the dissemination of education on disease states, therapies, medical products and devices, and other pertinent medical practice topics to physicians and other health care professionals. These activities may be supported by educational grants from HPI commercial interests, other commercial entities, government agencies, charitable foundations, or from subscription or registration fees.

Examples include CPD/CME travel companies, online educators, publishing companies, and simulation companies.

These entities do not provide marketing, brand recognition, advisory board support, or other services considered primarily the work of medical communication companies.

While these new definitions represent no changes to the current standards, the CFPC will be revising the CERT+ platform to help clarify the classification of eligible and ineligible CPD provider organizations. Additional updates will be made to the CERT+ application to allow for continued compliance with the *National Standard for Support of Accredited CPD Activities*.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT TIPS AND TRICKS

INTERACTIVITY REQUIREMENTS FOR ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE LEARNING

When designing online learning activities in the Self-Learning category it is important to ensure the program includes interactive components. This means there must be a way for participants to interact with the material, either through built-in questions or quizzes, gamification, reflective questionnaires, or other interactive technology. Passively watching a video without requiring further interaction with the material is not enough. There must also be a way for participants to interact with faculty or a facilitator related to the program content. Participants must be able to ask questions about the material or content. At a minimum this requirement can be met by providing an email address to which participants may submit questions with a published timeline for response. Alternatively, program providers can provide an FAQ page that is updated based on submitted questions. Program providers can also choose to employ chatrooms, discussion forums, or other more direct formats to interact with participants. For more information please refer to [Mainpro+ Certification Standards](#), Chapter 4: Mainpro+ Certification Requirements by Program Type.

STRATEGIES FOR BIAS MITIGATION IN MAINPRO+ CERTIFIED ACTIVITIES

The COI disclosure process is an important step in managing and mitigating potential COIs in CPD activities. It is essential for organizers of these activities to understand how learners may perceive these conflicts. A sound and transparent strategy for mitigating bias will help reassure learners about the legitimacy of the content being provided and ensure that programs meet the Mainpro+ certification standards.

Organizers of CPD activities can prevent or reduce the risk of COIs by selecting scientific planning committee members, speakers, moderators, facilitators, and authors who do not have relationships with organizations related to the content. This may not always be possible; therefore, when conflicts are identified there are steps that scientific planning committees can take to mitigate the potential for bias.

Once a COI is identified the scientific planning committee must determine whether it can be managed practically. If it cannot, the committee will need to select another presenter.

Suggestions for managing conflicts and mitigating biases of speakers/presenters:

- Change the focus of the CPD activity so the content is not about the products or services of the supporting organization, if that is the basis of the COI
- Ask the speaker to avoid making personal recommendations and limit their presentation to a discussion of the evidence; another presenter can be assigned to address broader implications and recommendations

- Scientific planning committees (or an alternative peer reviewer) may review the content/presentation in question to ensure that:
 - » All the recommendations involving clinical medicine are based on evidence that is accepted within the profession
 - » All scientific research referred to, reported, or used in the CPD activity in support or justification of patient care recommendations conforms to the generally accepted standards

What if a member of the scientific planning committee has declared a potential COI?

As mentioned above, the chair of the scientific planning committee must determine whether the COI can be managed practically. The chair may determine that the member with the conflict must refrain from participating in decision making for program elements connected to the conflict. If the conflict cannot be managed practically the member with the conflict may be asked to step down from the committee.

Other considerations for bias-mitigation strategies:

- For activities that occur more than once it is important to review evaluation feedback on an ongoing basis for bias identified by participants
- Speakers who have been identified as biased in the past should not be invited to speak again
- Program providers may choose to audit sessions where a COI has been identified to ensure proper disclosure practices are followed

Organizers of CPD activities should maintain documentation about the resolution of a COI in their files. The strategies scientific planning committees use to mitigate bias should be documented as part of the application for Mainpro+ credits and included on the mitigation of bias slide presented to learners.



NATIONAL STANDARD FOR SUPPORT OF ACCREDITED CPD ACTIVITIES: REVISED FAQs

On January 1, 2018, the CFPC, the Royal College, and the Collège des médecins du Québec (CMQ) released the [National Standard for Support of Accredited CPD Activities](#) (the Standard) as well as a set of frequently asked questions (FAQs) to support the implementation of the Standard. The intent of the Standard is to safeguard the integrity of accredited CPD activities from the influence of sponsoring organizations that could lead to bias.

Since that release we have monitored the questions, comments, and concerns regarding the practical implementation of the Standard. This feedback has provided valuable insights into the successes and challenges experienced in interpreting and applying the Standard to program development and delivery.

The CFPC, the Royal College, and the CMQ used this feedback to collaborate on revisions to the FAQs. In April 2019 we released the revised and expanded [National Standard for Support of Accredited CPD Activities FAQs for Implementation](#).

We understand that the implementation of the Standard has likely had an impact on your approach to CPD development and implementation, and we are grateful for your ongoing feedback during this period of change. We appreciate your continued support and your commitment to the creation of high-quality, evidence-based CPD for family physicians.

WHAT WE ARE READING: A CPD BIBLIOGRAPHY

Below is a list of scholarly literature that has recently come to our attention. These publications have attracted our interest because they address recent trends in CPD, support the principles of Mainpro+ certification standards, or introduce unique concepts in adult learning. We hope you find this information helpful as you develop CPD activities.

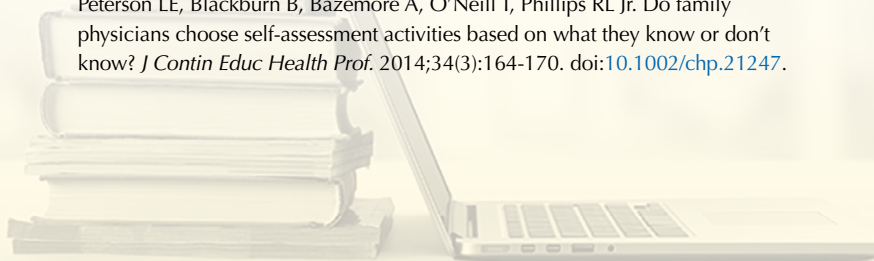
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