



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

PO Box 47890 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7890

Tel: (360) 236-4501 • FAX: (360) 586-7424 • TDD Relay Service: 1-800-833-6388

NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF A POLICY STATEMENT

Title of Policy Statement: Continuing Medical Education Requirements during the COVID-19 Response. Policy Number: PO 20-51

Issuing Entity: Podiatric Medical Board

Subject Matter: Addressing the impact COVID-19 response measures are having on the podiatric physician profession with regard to meeting the continuing medical education (CME) requirements.

Effective Date: April 16, 2020

Contact Person: Susan Gragg, Program Manager
PO Box 47852
Olympia, WA 98504-7852
360-236-4941
podiatric@doh.wa.gov

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**Department of Health
Office of Health Professions
Podiatric Medical Board**

Policy Statement

Revised – 10/18/11

Title:	Continuing Medical Education Requirements During the COVID-19 Response	Number: PO 20-51
References:	Chapter 18.22 RCW; WAC 246-922-300 ; WAC 246-922-310 ; WAC 246-12-210	
Contact:	Susan Gragg, Program Manager	
Phone:	360-236-4941	
Email:	podiatric@doh.wa.gov	
Effective Date:	April 16, 2020	
Supercedes:	N/A	
Approved By:	Randy Anderson, DPM Chair, Podiatric Medical Board	

In response to the Governor issued [Proclamation 20-25 Stay Home - Stay Healthy](#) that requires people to cease leaving their homes except to conduct essential activities or for employment of essential services; in response to other impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic; and within the authority under [WAC 246-12-210](#) that allows the Podiatric Medical Board (board) to grant an extension of continuing medical education (CME) requirements under what it determines are “extenuating circumstances”, the board has determined podiatric physicians are unable to timely complete CME requirements. The board is extending CME attestation that coincides with the license renewal extension authorized by the Secretary of the Department of Health. Podiatric physicians will attest to CME to coincide with their renewal through September 30, 2020.

Furthermore, during this timeframe the board will accept online¹ courses that meet the requirements of Category 1 or Category 2 as meeting the CME requirements in [WAC 246-922-310](#) through December 31, 2020.

Other circumstances related to completing CME and/or credentialing requirements beyond the individual licensee’s control will be considered on a case-by-case basis for extension or waiver.

Background

As the spread of COVID-19 continues and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance encourages the restriction of large gatherings, organizations and entities have canceled large professional development events and conferences that included significant continuing medical education opportunities.

¹ Online courses include those that are in-person, remote-attended, or prerecorded.

Many podiatric physicians, while not explicitly prohibited from providing patient care, have either scaled back or ceased practicing during the COVID-19 pandemic to adhere to the social distancing guidelines. The measures in place attempting to stem the spread of COVID-19 are contributing to financial hardship and uncertainty.

As well, without the capability to access expected routinely attended CME offerings and as financial uncertainty increases, podiatric physicians are without the ability and/or the means to meet their CME obligations for renewal of their licenses.

On February 29, 2020, the Governor issued [Proclamation 20-05](#) declaring a State of Emergency for all counties in the state of Washington.

Since large gatherings contribute to the spread of COVID-19 by offering more opportunities for person-to-person transmission, on March 15, 2020, the CDC issued guidance discouraging all gatherings of 50 or more. On March 16, 2020, the Governor issued [Proclamation 20-14](#) prohibiting gatherings of 50 or more in all counties in the state of Washington.

On March 23, 2020, the Governor issued [Proclamation 20-25 Stay Home—Stay Healthy](#) that requires people to cease leaving their homes except to conduct essential activities or for employment of essential services.

[WAC 246-922-300](#) requires podiatric physicians to complete one hundred hours of CME every two years and [WAC 246-922-310](#) outlines creditable podiatric CME.

[WAC 246-12-210](#) states: “A practitioner may be excused from or granted an extension of continuing education requirements due to illness or other extenuating circumstances. The profession’s regulatory entity determines when the requirements may be waived or may grant an extension.”

On April 2, 2020, and in accordance with [RCW 43.70.280](#), Secretary Wiesman extended health profession license expiration dates for licenses up for renewal between April 1 and September 30, 2020. Renewal payments will not be required until September 30, 2020.

In summary, due to stay at home orders and shutdowns related to COVID-19 response and in accordance with [WAC 246-12-210](#) that allow a profession’s regulatory entity to extend CME requirement when they determine that there are “extenuating circumstances,” the board has determined podiatric physicians who are unable to timely complete CME are hereby granted a CME extension that coincides with the license renewal extension authorized by the Secretary of the Department of Health. Podiatric physicians will attest to CME to coincide with their renewal through September 30, 2020.

Furthermore, during this timeframe the board will accept online courses that meet the requirements of Category 1 or Category 2 as meeting the CME requirements in [WAC 246-922-310](#) through December 31, 2020.

Other circumstances related to completing CME and/or credentialing requirements beyond the individual licensee’s control will be considered on a case-by-case basis for extension or waiver.