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

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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.

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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

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.