

## **NEW CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION MANDATE--REQUIRED FOR JUNE 30, 2015 RENEWAL**

During its most recent session, the South Carolina General Assembly passed a law to amend the Continuing Medical Education (CME) requirements for physicians who wish to renew their licenses. Specifically, South Carolina Code §40-47-40(2)(a) will now require physicians to demonstrate completion of at least two (2) hours of CME coursework relating to approved procedures of prescribing and monitoring controlled substances listed in Schedules II, III, and IV of the schedules provided for in Sections 44-53-210, 44-53-230, 44-53-250, and 44-53-270.

### **What does this mean for you?**

**As part of the 40 hours of CME that you must complete every two years in order to renew your license, you must now receive and certify completion of 2 Category 1 CME hours in approved procedures of prescribing and monitoring controlled substances before your license will be renewed.** These 2 required hours may be counted toward the required 30 hours you must receive in your specialty. The total hours required for CME compliance is still 40 hours, not 42.

This law became effective on June 6, 2014. Therefore, you will be required to complete these two hours before your next renewal period, which will begin on April 1, 2015. The renewal deadline is June 30, 2015.

The CME requirement only applies to physicians who are renewing their licenses, not to new applicants.

**Exceptions: This new CME requirement does NOT apply to 1] physicians who are renewing their licenses for the first time after receipt of permanent licensure, 2] reinstatement applicants or 3] physicians with a Limited License.**

**However, the new prescribing CME requirement DOES apply to permanently licensed physicians who do not currently prescribe controlled substances.**

With the exception of the new CME requirement, the 2015 renewal process has not changed. You will receive a renewal notice on or about April 1, 2015 containing specific information about renewing your medical license online. After you receive the renewal notice, most licensees are eligible for online renewal. As with previous renewals, you are required to certify completion of all required CME on the renewal form. You are not required to submit actual CME certificates when you renew.

A copy of the board's advisory opinion regarding the new CME requirement is posted on the board's webpage under 'Board News' as well as under 'Laws and Policies'.

There is also a list of known course providers on the board's webpage. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive. For your convenience, please contact these course providers directly to take their course. If you wish to use a provider not on the list, the course must provide 2 hours of Category I CME from an ACCME or CCME-approved course in prescribing and monitoring controlled substances.

According to the board's policy, offerings that fulfill this requirement include but are not limited to CME hours in controlled substance prescribing sponsored by the Federation of State Medical Boards, (e.g. *Responsible Opioid Prescribing, A Clinician's Guide* by Scott M. Fishman, MD) the South Carolina Medical Association, other professional organizations with ACCME or CCME certified CME (e.g. AAFP, ACP), and any FDA-REMS (Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy) compliant CME courses.

**What if you choose not to obtain CME coursework to establish competency?**

The Board of Medical Examiners, at its August 4, 2014 meeting, concluded that all physicians are required to complete the 2 hours of coursework in approved procedures of prescribing and monitoring controlled substances, even if they choose to renew their license by establishing professional competency by other means, such as certification of added qualifications or recertification after examination by a national specialty board recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties or American Osteopathic Association or another approved specialty board certification, completion of a residency program or fellowship in medicine in the United States or Canada approved by the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education or American Osteopathic Association, passage of the Special Purpose Examination or Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Variable Purpose Examination, successful completion of a clinical skills assessment program approved by the board, such as the Institute for Physician Evaluation or the Center for Personalized Education for Physicians. The new 2-hour CME requirement does not apply to reinstatement applicants.