The Latest on PA Certification

Presentation Outline

- About NCCPA
- The New Certification Maintenance Process
- A Few Words about PANRE
- Specialty Certificate of Added Qualifications (CAQ) Program

About NCCPA

- Independent, not-for-profit organization
- Current Mission: To serve the public through exemplary programs that evaluate critical PA competencies and require the pursuit of life-long learning and improvement
- Previous Mission: To ensure that certified PAs meet professional standards of knowledge and skills
- Over 105,000 PAs have been certified since NCCPA was established in 1975

Our Board of Directors

2 public representatives, 4 PA directors-at-large and nominees from...

- American Hospital Association
- American Medical Association
- American Osteopathic Association
- Assoc of Amer Medical Colleges
- Federation of State Medical Boards
- PA Education Association
- US Department of Veterans Affairs

- American Academies of:
  - Family Physicians
  - Pediatrics
  - Physician Assistants
- American Colleges of:
  - Emergency Physicians
  - Physicians
  - Surgeons

The Board currently includes 11 PAs, 8 physicians and 4 non-clinicians.
Changes to the Certification Maintenance Process

How It All Began

• Calls for greater accountability and higher quality in health care spurred major change in physician certification and certification maintenance programs with movement from CME to continuous professional development
• NCCPA felt it appropriate to consider whether similar changes were needed for PAs—with our commitment to the public’s interest in mind.
• NCCPA committed first to defining PA competencies and using them as the basis for a holistic review of what we are and what we should be assessing.
• AAPA, PAEA and ARC-PA all participated in the development of PA competencies and the current revision process

6 Areas of PA Competencies

Part of the rationale for change is incorporating more of these competencies into the process.

1. Medical knowledge
2. Patient care
3. Interpersonal & communication skills
4. Professionalism
5. System-based practice
6. Practice-based learning and improvement

New Process

• 100 CME credits every two years
  – Still 50 Category 1 credits
  – 20 of the Category 1 credits must be designated as self-assessment and/or performance improvement

• PANRE every 6 years
Directed CME Defined

100 Credit CME Requirement (every 2 years)

Category 1 (50 credits) Category 1 or 2 (50 credits)

20 Category 1 CME credits designated as self-assessment and/or performance improvement

Why Self-Assessment (SA)?

Self-assessment is the process of conducting a systematic review of one's own performance, knowledge base or skill set for the purpose of improving future performance, expanding knowledge, or honing skills.

Things you know

Things you know you don’t know

Things you don’t know you don’t know

2012 study concluded that more than 20% of core information guiding clinical practice is changed within one year based on new evidence or guidelines.

Self-assessment makes CME more meaningful and practical to one’s practice.

It requires active engagement in the learning process.

Why Self-Assessment (SA)?

• Content covers: Cardiology, Dermatology, Endocrinology and Metabolism, Gastroenterology and Hepatology, General Internal Medicine, Hematology and Oncology, Infectious Disease, Nephrology, Neurology, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine, Rheumatology and Hospital Medicine is covered across all specialty areas.

• 1,200 Multiple Choice Questions, hundreds of figures and charts.

• 174 CME credits available, minimum of 20 AAPA Category 1 Credits™ Self Assessment CME credits per specialty section.

• Digital format - iPad, smart phone compatible.

• Cost: Special AAPA pricing of $369 expected soon.
- Earn up to 55 AAPA Category 1 Self-Assessment CME credits
- Cost: $199 for ACEP members, $299 for non-members
- 4 sections of the program:
  1. Self-Assessment – 60 pre-test questions
  2. Study and Practice – There are 24 categories from which to choose (i.e. GI disorders, cardiovascular disorders, musculoskeletal disorders, etc.)
  3. Post-Test – Take the full 450-question Post-Test. You have to score 75% or better to get the CME credit certificate.
  4. Evaluation – Before you can claim your CME and print your certificate, you'll have to answer a few evaluation questions.

Modules 001-005: 12 CME Credits Total
- DL 001 Skin Cancer
- DL 002 Papulosquamous Disorders
- DL 003 Fungal Infections
- DL 004 Acneiform Eruptions
- DL 005 Viral Conditions

Modules 101-110: 70 CME Credits Total
- Pediatric Dermatology
- Connective Tissue Disorders
- Cutaneous Manifestations
- Vesiculobullous Disorders
- Hair Disorders
- Nail Disorders
- Pigmented Lesions
- Disorders of Pigmentation
- Dermatologic Pharmacology
- Eczematous Disorders

AAPA’s Learning Central
Currently: 116 Self-Assessment CME examples in many different specialty areas (with 31 more “coming soon”)
Prices range from free to $300 - $400 depending on the sponsor and the number of credits offered
AAPA’s Learning Central

Currently approved Self-Assessment CME activities include topics in:

- Orthopaedic surgery
- Neurology
- Palliative care
- Pediatrics
- Cardiology
- Emergency medicine
- Neurosurgery
- Oncology
- Rheumatology
- OB/GYN
- Dermatology
- Hospital medicine
- Endocrinology
- General topics

What is Performance Improvement (PI) CME?

PI-CME is active learning and the application of learning to improve your practice.

Three-step process:
1. Compare some aspect of practice to national benchmarks, performance guidelines or other established evidence-based metric or standard.
2. Based on the comparison, develop and implement a plan for improvement in that area.
3. Evaluate the impact of the improvement effort by comparing the results of the original comparison with the new results or outcomes.

Put another way, there are three stages for which you can earn CME credit:

- Stage A - Identify evidence-based measure and assess practice (5 PI-CME credits)
- Stage B - Intervention(s) (5 PI-CME credits)
- Stage C - Re-measure; document improvement (5 PI-CME credits)
- Completing all 3 stages (bonus of 5 PI-CME credits)

METRIC is offered by the American Academy of Family Physicians
- Can be completed individually or as group
- Cost to PA non-members: $125
- Each module = 20 PI-CME credits
- Modules available in
  - Diabetes
  - Asthma
  - Hypertension
  - Geriatrics
  - Childhood immunization
  - Adolescent immunization
  - High-risk adult immunization
• EQIPP is offered by the American Academy of Pediatrics
• Can be completed individually or as group
• Cost to PA non-members: $59
• Each module = 20 PI-CME credits
• Modules available in
  – Asthma
  – Immunizations
  – Diabetes Care
  – Newborn Screening
  – Oral Health
  – Safe and Healthy Beginnings

PI-CME Opportunities Through AAPA

Currently:
27 PI-CME examples in many different specialty areas (with 24 more "coming soon")

Prices range from free to $300 – $400 depending on the sponsor and the number of credits offered

AAPA’s Learning Central

Currently approved PI-CME activities include topics in:

● Neurology
● Pediatrics
● Emergency medicine
● Rheumatology
● Nephrology
● Endocrinology
● General topics

Coming soon topics include:

● Psychiatry
● PM&R
● Hematology
● More general topics (including 1-2 non-clinical)
More on Performance Improvement (PI) CME

- Can be done in partnership with your supervising physician and others in practice
  - Board-certified physicians also have this requirement
- This concept has evolved since NCCPA first announced it was being considered.
  - Asked for and listened to feedback
  - Identified ways to make this less burdensome without sacrificing its effectiveness
- Can take different forms
  - An established PI CME activity (like METRIC or EQIPP)
  - An activity or project that is developed individually by a PA or institution

Myth #1:
PI-CME takes more time than traditional CME

- Completed over a longer period of time, but not necessarily requiring more actual time
- Integrated into practice
- Can be completed as a team -- Bonus credits to be awarded for IPC
- EHRs can simplify data retrieval and analysis

Myth #2:
PI-CME is just another QI or research project

- In PI-CME, the learning and engagement = the expected change and improvement, unlike actual QI where documented changes must be shown
- No research or QI skills required
- No process or systems change necessary
- No final “paper” to get credit, there is value in the process itself

Myth #3: PI-CME requires Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval

- PI-CME is a tool for monitoring and improving provider practice
- Not intended to generate scientific knowledge or be applied beyond your specific practice
- Not developed to test a new intervention, so not considered human subject research
- In 2011, IOM developed “common rule” supporting PI-CME exemption from IRB review
Certification Maintenance Illustrated

1st CME Cycle
By the end of the 4th CME cycle, you must have 40 Category 1 CME credits through SA activities and 40 Category 1 CME credits through PI activities.

2nd CME Cycle

3rd CME Cycle
During each cycle, earn 100 CME credits including 50 Category 1 credits with 20 earned through self-assessment and/or PI-CME activities.

4th CME Cycle

5th CME Cycle
Earn 100 CME credits including 50 Category 1 and pass PANRE

Transition Timeline

- New PAs and those regaining certification after a lapse who become certified in 2014 will start the new 10-year cycle.
- Beginning in 2014, certified PAs will transition to the new 10-year cycle at the end of their current 6-year cycle.
- Sign in to your record at www.nccpa.net to find out when you transition.
- Here's what that looks like...
These progress bars show how many SA and PI credits you have logged during the current 10-year cycle and the number of each required over the 10-year cycle. This will help you gauge, during each two-year cycle, how many you need to earn of each. Credit Totals for each of your two-year cycles are displayed and show you how many credits of different types you have logged out of the required amount. This is the place you can go to see a running total of your CME credits at any time.

PAs on the new 10-year certification maintenance cycle will have a 10 Year Status tab. Positive Implications for PAs

• Proactively addresses elevated expectations
  – FSMB has recommended that states implement a “maintenance of licensure” process for physicians that requires just this sort of activity
  – Follows ABMS MOC process for physicians
• Elevates the relevance of CME activities
• Focus more on performance as related to patient and community health
• PI-CME aligns with Pay for Reporting (P4R) and Pay for Performance (P4P)
• Fewer exams

Ongoing Next Steps for Certification Maintenance Changes

• Identification of multiple SA and PI options in many specialties
• Identification of SA and PI options for non-practicing PAs
  – Focus on public health
  – PAEA Workgroup: PA educators and administrators
• Development of application process through AAPA for self-directed and institutional PI activities

A Few Words about the PA National Recertifying Examination (PANRE)
Recertification Decisions

1. Year 5 or year 6 (soon to be 9 or 10)?
   - 2 opportunities in both years to pass the PANRE
   - Taking the exam in year 5/9 gives you more opportunities to pass and doesn’t change your overall cycle
2. Which version of PANRE to take?
   - Surgery
   - Primary care
   - Adult medicine

Quick Plug for Practice Exams

Available online for both PANCE and PANRE

- 4 exams available
- 120 questions taken from NCCPA test question bank
- Just $35!
- Great way to see how you should focus your preparation
- Get more details and register online at www.nccpa.net

Format of Practice Exam Feedback

Specialty Certificate of Added Qualifications (CAQ) Program
Key Principles of the Specialty CAQ Program

- NCCPA (and many stakeholders) agree that the PA-C must maintain its position as the primary credential for all PAs.
- NCCPA has remained committed to developing a voluntary specialty program.
  - A CAQ is not required to maintain NCCPA certification, and we require licensure as a condition of earning a CAQ so that table can't be turned.
- The program has been developed to be as inclusive as possible, recognizing the individual differences among and within specialties.

What Specialties?

- Emergency Medicine
- Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgery
- Orthopaedic Surgery
- Nephrology
- Psychiatry

Exam Debuting in 2014:
- Pediatrics
- Hospital Medicine

Specialty CAQ Process

Prerequisite:
- License
- PA-C

Maintenance Process (10-yr CAQ cycle):
- 125 credits specialty CME
- Specialty exam

Basic Prerequisites

- Current PA-C certification
- Unrestricted license(s):
  - Addresses the area of professionalism (one of the six core competencies as defined in Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession)
  - Pre-empts state boards from requiring our CAQ for PA licensure
Variations Among Specialties in the Areas of…

- CME requirements
- Experience (ranges from 1 year to 2 years of full-time practice equivalence)
- Specific procedures/cases that PAs should have experience with or knowledge of

Details by specialty available at www.nccpa.net/SpecialtyCAQs.aspx.

CAQ Exams

- Content blueprints developed using data from practice analysis
  - Identifies set of knowledge, skills and abilities used by PAs in the specialty
  - Available online for each specialty
- Test committees include PAs and MDs working in the specialty
- Other resources available online
  - Disease and disorder lists
  - Sample test items

To view content blueprints, disease and disorder lists, and sample items, visit: www.nccpa.net/SpecialtyCAQs.aspx.

CAQ Exams

- 120 questions
  - Targeted to certified PAs working in the specialty
  - All questions available for scoring if they meet our performance standards
- 2-hour exam – no breaks
- Specialty exams are administered nationwide once a year at Pearson VUE testing centers.
- Cost $250 plus a $100 administrative fee paid when you start the CAQ process

CAQ Recipients

- 530 PAs have been awarded the CAQs since 2011
  - 334 in emergency medicine
  - 97 in psychiatry
  - 63 in orthopaedic surgery
  - 27 in CVTS
  - 12 in nephrology

Total of 533 CAQs issued -- three PAs earned CAQs in two specialties
1. Certification Maintenance Changes
   - CME requirements will include 20 credits of specifically designated CME
   - Change from 6 to 10-year cycle
   - Rolling implementation will begin in 2014

2. Specialty CAQs
   - Voluntary recognition program
   - Available in 7 specialties

Thank You

www.nccpa.net