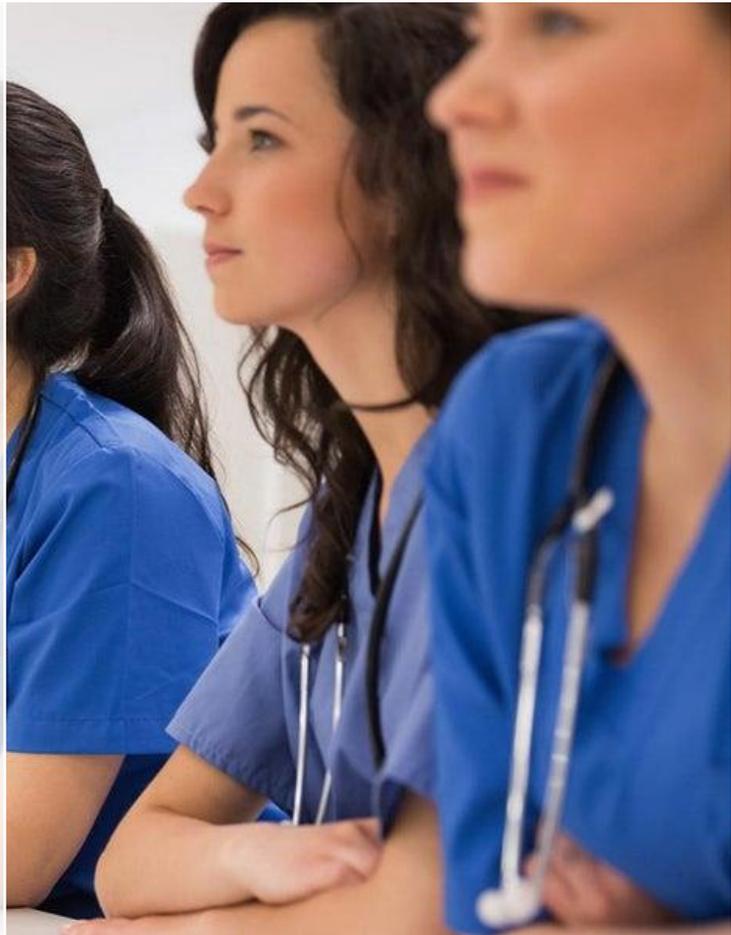


The Continuing Medical Education Coalition

CME Coalition Prospectus

2021



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INTRODUCTION

As we enter our tenth year, the Continuing Medical Education (CME) Coalition (cmecoalition.org) is firmly established as the sector's undisputed voice — on the state, local and federal levels — for policy matters that impact the provision of post-graduate education to the health care workforce. Based in Washington, DC, the CME Coalition is a membership organization comprised of the nation's leading CME providers, beneficiaries (including both educational institutions and professional societies) and supporters of CME (such as pharmaceutical manufacturers and device makers) that exists to advocate for the importance of a robust national commitment to continuing medical education. Additional partnerships and affiliations have also been extended to health policy thought leaders and other interested parties who share an appreciation for the mission of the organization.

THE MISSION

In 2021, the CME Coalition will further build upon its legacy and execute on its mission to: (1) educate federal, state and third-party policy makers on issues related to the provision of CME; (2) advocate for sensible federal, state, and non-governmental actors' policies to advance the practice of CME; and (3) provide thought leadership and convene the CME stakeholder community to chart the future of CME in the evolving world of quality measures, value based contracting, and health system reform. This year, as our nation continues to battle the COVID-19 public health emergency, we will shift our narrative to amplify the role of CME in support of the national response to the pandemic and to seek additional government funding to support COVID-related medical education.

As in past years, the CME Coalition will fulfill these objectives by developing, managing, and implementing a comprehensive government affairs, stakeholder engagement, and public affairs strategy to promote the value of accredited CME to a broad audience of practitioners, supporters and policy makers.

The Coalition will also continue to serve as a vital conduit between our members and the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) and provide informational, analytical and legal resources for member organizations seeking assistance with understanding and implementing the myriad, and ever changing, rules and regulations that guide CME. With our members' support, we will remain a recognized policy thought leader and participates in numerous activities, programs and venues to better inform all CME stakeholders of the policy landscape and real-world trends impacting the enterprise.

2020 ACHIEVEMENTS

I. CME Compliance Guide

With the support of a special grant from a member in 2020, the Coalition employed its legal counsel at the nationally renowned firm of Arnold & Porter to produce a comprehensive compliance reference guide for the use of CME practitioners. The Guide, which has quickly proven to be an invaluable resource for individuals and organizations, was made available to all CME Coalition members for review, comment, and suggested changes prior to its release to the public at large.

Its final version (it was updated in September) spanned 47 pages and addressed 53 FAQs, and we anticipate updating it again in Q1 2021 to reference the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education's (ACCME) revised [Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education](#) (December 2020).

In October, the Coalition also provided a special webinar with our legal counsel to address key elements of the Guide, answer questions, and identify additional areas for possible update. Additionally, the Coalition provided multiple members with one-on-one advisory counsel regarding implementation and interpretation of the Guide.

II. Comments to ACCME re: Commercial Standards

With the input of many of our members, the Coalition officially submitted comments on behalf of our collective membership to the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education's (ACCME) for consideration during its drafting of revised [Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education](#). We shared our comments with over 700 individuals who participated in our informational [webinar](#) on the subject.

The CME Coalition engaged with the ACCME over several months as it reviewed the submissions it received from various stakeholders. We were very pleased when the Standards were released in December 2020, and we found that they were largely reflective of our input.

III. Support for Coalition Members in Dealing with COVID

The COVID-19 pandemic was devastating to traditional, in-person continuing medical education and many of the small companies that are the engine of CME innovation. Several of these companies are among the Coalition's membership. The CME Coalition spent considerable time on Capitol Hill in 2020, educating members of Congress about the vital role of CME in our health care system — both COVID-related and more generally — and seeking additional funding and hospital spending flexibility as part of the various Congressional COVID relief packages.

In 2020, the CME Coalition provided unprecedented levels of support and advice to some of our providers who struggled to survive the downturn in their business. For some of these companies and

organizations, the Coalition provided specific help in understanding and accessing the federal assistance that was provided to small businesses as part of its COVID relief packages.

IV. State Activity

In 2020, the CME Coalition kept a close eye on state efforts that would negatively impact CME, including in California and Maine. In California, for example, the Coalition monitored and advised members about a renewed law in California requiring CME events based in the state to include implicit bias training and has identified interest in other state legislatures for similar bills.

Additionally, the Coalition was effective in an advocacy campaign to encourage the Maine's Board of Pharmacy to abandon an ill-conceived limitation on physician payments to \$250. In a win for the Coalition, the State revised its 2019 gift ban proposal to *exclude* all payments related to CME, eliminating the proposed cap on speaker honoraria and associated expenses which could have had a chilling impact on physician participation.

V. Programs and Presentations

Despite the lockdown, the CME Coalition managed to participate in numerous programs and presentations to offer insight to the broader CME stakeholder community around issues related to compliance and policy. The Coalition managed to sneak in program at the Alliance conference in San Francisco in January, before the shutdown, that featured a Q&A with ACCME leadership.

Other programs featuring Coalition presentations included the Alliance Industry Summit (AIS) and CBI's 18th Annual Medical Education and Grants Conference, among others.

PRIORITY ISSUES FOR 2021

As much as ever, the need for an organization to represent and promote the interests of CME among the nation's policymakers is crucial. And while there are new opportunities to explain the importance of continuing medical education to our healthcare system to the Administration, Congress, and in the states, skeptics of commercially supported CME remain active. At the core, most criticism of private sector support for CME has erroneously presumed that such funding constitutes an inherent conflict of interest and inappropriately influences the decisions of healthcare providers. Therefore, we must remain vigilant and continue to champion CME, promote its responsible use, and create opportunities to enhance policy maker support for CME.

The CME Coalition has identified the following priority issues that it will be working on in 2021:

I. Congressional Briefing and Virtual Fly-in

The CME Coalition will execute a Congressional Briefing highlighting the benefits of CME in 2021 that will serve as a mechanism for identifying and securing congressional champions for our agenda.

We will endeavor to conduct a virtual “Fly-in” where we will meet with key policy makers on Capitol Hill about the importance of CME. We have conducted regular meetings on the Hill in the past, and had some members join us in those meetings, but we have seen success recently at virtual fly-ins for organizations and we will look to conduct one of our own in 2021.

II. Ongoing COVID-19 Advocacy

As the scientific community’s understanding of the COVID-19 virus continues to progress, treatment and care for COVID-19 patients is rapidly changing and can be expected to evolve over the coming months and years. Millions of clinicians — from Emergency Medical Services personnel to in-hospital healthcare workers to office-based physicians — will need to be educated on how to diagnose and treat patients with coronavirus.

Historically, the cost of CME has been borne collectively by a combination of hospitals, grants from private industry, the government, and the clinicians themselves. However, as a result of the severe financial stress impacting many hospitals, companies, and state governments, the traditional funding sources for continuing medical education have been decimated at a time of greatest need. Meanwhile, the total cost of educating America’s HCPs on the impact of COVID-19 on their practice is conservatively estimated to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

In 2021, the Coalition will continue to advocate for dedicating programs dedicated to supporting the education of the nation’s healthcare workforce. This includes, for example, advocating for funding for titles III and VII of the Public Health Service Act to facilitate continuing medical education initiatives related to COVID-19.

III. State Activity

The Coalition will continue to actively monitor and fight state legislative attempts to curb CME activities/events. While the challenges we face in the states are difficult to anticipate, the Coalition has a strong track record of effectively engaging in processes that could undermine the provision of CME events, including those outlined above in California and Maine.

IV. Stakeholder Engagement / Thought Leadership

The Coalition will continue to represent the CME “enterprise” and educate the broader stakeholder community on the value of CME. Through appearances at national conferences, webinars, engagement with trade press, and other leadership opportunities, the Coalition will continue to work to provide a unified voice and elevate the status of the industry.

Before the establishment of the Coalition, there was little organized support for CME as an industry. However, after years of effective advocacy on the value of educating America’s provider workforce, policymakers are increasingly looking to CME as part of the solution to the nation’s most pressing

public health challenges — from educating opioid prescribers on the risk of addiction, to addressing drug pricing by filling knowledge gaps on biosimilars, to spreading best practices on the treatment of COVID-19. By continuing to position the Coalition as the preeminent thought leader on issues related to provider education, we hope to continue to promote CME as an essential facet of America’s public health system.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

Since our founding, membership on the Steering Committee offers a seat at the table in determining all Coalition policy and significant decisions (which are determined by consensus). Steering Committee Members are invited to participate in regular monthly calls and populate our task force work groups.

As part of the Coalition, Steering Committee members are often invited to participate in policy meetings and briefing with Administration officials and Members of Congress as issues warrant. Further, Steering Committee Members receive frequent email updates regarding Coalition activities, CME policy developments and news reports related to CME. Members also have direct access to Coalition staff, which is housed at the Washington-based health policy firm of Thorn Run Partners, who are at their disposal for individualized regulatory and compliance counsel.

The CME Coalition also produces a continuous stream of useful materials for CME practitioners for use by its members, such as regularly updated ACCME Standards and Sunshine Act Compliance Guides, legal memoranda, FAQs, comments to CMS and ACCME, and press statements on CME related issues. As part of its role as the voice of CME, the CME Coalition is an oft-cited resource in both the trade and “Beltway” media on pressing issues of the day. All of this material may be found at the Coalition’s website, www.cmecoalition.org.

In addition to supporting the Coalition's extensive advocacy efforts with Washington policymakers and the broader health care provider community, many members also find considerable value in receiving Thorn Run Partners’ regularized health policy updates and analysis, which is provided as an additional benefit.

COST OF MEMBERSHIP

With a reasonable rate structure that strives to attract both corporate and non-profit members to our Steering Committee, we are confident that our members enjoy significant benefits of membership and see a real return on their commitment. Annual dues among Steering Committee members range from \$2,000 to \$15,000 depending upon a member’s annual revenue or nonprofit status. The annual membership dues structure is as follows:

___ Annual revenue is under \$2.5M/per year — annual dues are set at \$2,000.

___ Annual revenue is above \$2.5M but under \$10M/per year — annual dues are set at \$7,500.

___ Annual revenue is above \$10M/year — annual dues are \$15,000.

If you are interested in learning more about membership, please contact the Coalition's Executive Director Chris Lamond (clamond@thornrun.com) or Senior Advisor Andrew Rosenberg (arosenberg@thornrun.com), who can provide additional information on the next steps to secure your membership.