



**APHA**

## **Continuing Education Guidelines**

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Continuing Education Mission and Accreditations: The American Public Health Association (APHA) mission includes providing and co-providing quality, continuing education (CE) for public health professionals. The mission also includes approving educational activities that are developed by external entities and submitted to APHA for approval to award CE contact hour credits in public health and related areas. The Association's program is an integrated, multi-disciplinary CE program with a single set of policies and processes that meet the requirements of the accreditations that it holds.

An Association priority is to assure compliance with the following CE accrediting organizations:

- National Certified Health Education (NCHEC) for certified health education specialists;
- Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) for physicians and non-physicians;
- American Nurses Credential Center (ANCC) Commission on Accreditation for nurse; and
- National Board of Public Health Examiners (NBPHE) for certified public health professionals.

A number of public health professionals in other disciplines may also benefit from these accreditations for re-licensure, re-certification, or other recognitions.

Responsibility: The responsibility for compliance with accreditation requirements for CE worthy activities is shared among all APHA planners, planning reviewers, presenters, panelists, moderators, authors and the CE staff in the APHA Learning & Professional Development Programs (LPDP) Unit. When APHA and APHA/PHN are functioning in the Approver status, the responsibility is shared among its peer reviewers, staff and the planners of the external entity seeking approval to grant CE credits for its educational activity.

### **Policies**

**Policy 1 - Educational content** - The following parts of an educational session/activity must be independent, objective, and free from bias by a professional, financial or personal interest, or a commercial interest:

- Identification of CE learning needs,
- Determination of learning objectives,
- Selection and presentation of content,
- Selection of individuals, groups, or entities that may influence content or presenters,
- Selection of educational materials such as handouts.

- A) **Abstract** – Abstract of at least 2 sentences that explains/describes the presentation to be given. It must be objective, free from bias and promotion, and not include the names of commercial entities, products or services. Using generic names of drugs and devices is acceptable.
- B) **Learning Objective** – There must be one measurable learning objective. This objective must have only one action verb. APHA provides a list of acceptable action verbs online where the learning objective is entered. APHA only evaluates the first listed learning objective. Additional learning objectives may be added and each must have a single action verb, however they will not be evaluated.
- C) **Off-Label or Experimental Use** - Any off-label or experimental use (clinical trials) of a product or service must be disclosed to participant learners prior to the beginning of the presentation.
- D) **Teaching strategies/methods** – Acceptable strategies include presentation followed by question and answer; keynote followed by discussion; panels with discussions; and/or demonstrations, interactive learning, small group activity and/or roundtable discussion.

**Policy 2: Policy on Conflicts of Interest (COI).**

Definitions of a COI: A COI may be actual or potential. If a reasonable person might perceive a COI, then it is a perceived conflict. If there is only a potential or perceived COI, then these must be treated the same as if a COI actually exists. An actual COI exists when one has a financial, professional and/or personal relationship that may influence the educational content. These types of relationships may overlap or exist simultaneously.

- A ‘financial interest’ may include, but is not limited to, a financial benefit that is expected by an individual through employment such as a wage or salary, self-employment, independent contractor, an intellectual property right that results in a royalty or other remuneration, consulting or speaking fee, teaching pay, honoraria, ownership interest (e.g., stocks, stock options, or other ownership interest, excluding diversified mutual funds), membership on advisory committee, review panel, board, or other activity from which remuneration is received or expected.
  - A ‘professional interest’ may include, but is not limited to, a situation in which an entity receives a contract or grant and manages the funds, but an individual is the principal, named investigator, or is in any position to influence the results or outcomes. This includes students.
  - A ‘personal interest’ may include, but is not limited to, a financial relationship that is held by one’s spouse or partner. Also any of the relationships mentioned above may also be a ‘personal interest’.
- A) A COI must be disclosed while a conflict is present and for 12 months after it is ended.
  - B) Refusal to disclose disqualifies one from participating in CE granting activities.
  - C) APHA is required to have a process to identify and resolve any COI before the CE activity is presented. This form requires disclosure of any financial, professional or personal conflict and it requires a signature to agree to follow the APHA policies that resolve the conflict. The process is:
    - Planners, presenters, authors, moderators, panelists, or speaker respondents must complete an APHA COI form before assuming these roles.

- A completed COI form is available via website when it is opened up to all attendees to view which is weeks before the activity. Disclosure of whether a COI may or may not exist is included in the APHA Annual Meeting program, both online and in hardcopy.
- Exception: When there is a last minute change in presenter, moderator, panelist, or respondent, then this is announced at the beginning of the educational session and a completed COI form is submitted to the CE staff as soon as possible either when the change happens, or immediately after the session.

D) APHA meets the requirements for disclosure to activity/session learners through the advance publication in the online APHA program. No verbal disclosures are required at the time of the presentation. However, presenters or moderators may opt to give an oral disclosure but this is not a requirement and documentation is not required.

**Policy 3: Commercial Support.** Commercial support is defined as financial or in-kind contributions given by a commercial interest entity, which is to pay for some or all of the costs of the educational activity/session

The planner should contact the CE staff to follow the appropriate process if accepting commercial support related to learning institute, roundtable scientific sessions or theatre sessions.

Use of section enrichment funds to provide remuneration to speakers must be reviewed by the CE staff to assure compliance for CE.

A learning institute, scientific session, roundtable or theater, may not have a commercial support/interest related to the educational session/activity.