

PATIENT SAFETY CONTINUING EDUCATION

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Per Pennsylvania State Board of Pharmacy's Regulation §27.32, during each biennial renewal period pharmacists must complete a minimum of 30 contact hours (3 CEU) of continuing education, which includes the following specific areas of continuing education learning:

- All pharmacist licensees are required to complete at least 2 of the 30 contact hours in continuing education programs that have the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) topic designator "Patient Safety." The requirement is stated in Board Regulation §27.32(a).
- Pharmacist licensees with authority to administer injectable medications, biologicals and immunizations must complete at least 2 of the required 30 hours subject matter that addresses the administration of injectable medications, biologicals and immunizations, including, but not limited to, disease epidemiology, vaccine characteristics, injection technique, emergency response to adverse events and related topics. The requirement is stated in Board Regulation §27.407.

This article will focus on the patient safety requirements for continuing education.

This biennial renewal period, which runs from 10/1/2012 to 9/30/2014, is the first renewal period where patient safety continuing education is required. The State Board of Pharmacy is providing this information to help licensees understand the new requirement and comply with it.

According to the Frequently Asked Questions on the ACPE website <https://www.acpe-accredit.org/pharmacists/faqs.asp>, each continuing education program includes designators within the ACPE Universal Activity Number. The format and topic designators are listed below.

Format Designators

L - Live activities

H - Home study and other mediated activities

C – Contain both live and home study components

Topic Designators – activities are related to

01 - Disease State Management/Drug therapy

02 - AIDS therapy

03 - Law (related to pharmacy practice)

04 - General Pharmacy

05 - Patient Safety

The topic designator follows the format designator in the Universal Activity Number. The

“05” topic designator should be used by pharmacists to determine whether or not a program meets the patient safety requirement.

The State Board of Pharmacy does not track patient safety programs offered by continuing education providers. To help pharmacists locate continuing education programs, ACPE does offer a search function called Pharmacists’ Learning Assistance Network (P.L.A.N.), for which the link is <https://www.acpe-accredit.org/pdfwebtool/plan/SearchPLAN.aspx>. There is currently no topic search for Patient Safety but “Safety” is a choice in the “Topics” drop down list. When this author searched P.L.A.N. using “Safety” as the topic, some but not all of the search results had “05” topic designators. Pharmacists who access P.L.A.N. to locate continuing education programs to meet the patient safety requirement should double check that the programs selected do include the topic designator “05.”

Starting with the 2014 continuing education audit and all subsequent audits, the Commonwealth will audit pharmacists for completion of the patient safety continuing education. When renewing your license in 2014, the Board will require you to verify that you completed two contact hours in Patient Safety. If you are selected for the continuing education audit, the Board will seek verification from you of the completion of these two contact hours in patient safety programs. Failure to complete required continuing education may result in sanctions against the pharmacist’s license and possible suspension of the license.

Only continuing education programs offered by ACPE-accredited providers of continuing pharmaceutical education targeted toward pharmacists are acceptable to the Board. Continuing education program providers that are not ACPE-accredited must submit a request to the Board for approval at least 60 days prior to the start date of the program and show program accreditation similar to ACPE accreditation standards.

In conclusion, pharmacists must complete at least 2 hours of patient safety continuing education each renewal period as part of their continuing education. This applies to the current renewal period of 10/1/2012 to 9/30/2014.