

Frequently Asked Questions

Continuing Education Program for maintenance of BCCI certification

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1. What are interdisciplinary care rounds, and why may they NOT be counted as CE?

Interdisciplinary rounds are daily or weekly meetings for discussion of a patient's plan of care and discharge needs. They are considered a regular, routine part of a chaplain's job description; therefore, they may not be counted toward continuing education.

A number of people have expressed surprise at this exclusion, on the premise that they "learn a lot" from these meetings. Certainly, there is no argument that our daily work with patients and staff provides us with many learning opportunities. Perhaps the most important principle we learned in clinical pastoral education (CPE) is that every one of us – patient, staff member and chaplain – is a "living human document" with educational potential. An ancient teaching of the Talmud posits that "a wise person learns from all people," basing the principle on the text Psalms 119:99, "From all who have taught me, I have been enlightened."

Nonetheless, the intent of a professional continuing education program is to reach beyond these daily encounters to pursue more formal, structured learning experiences.

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2. Can education to develop as a chaplain manager, department director or administrator be counted as CE?

Yes, material that helps you become a better chaplain manager or administrator may be counted as CE. Examples include finance, personnel management, leadership and HR law. However, management-related CE is capped at 10 hours per year.

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3. Why 50 hours annually? Isn't that more than the other disciplines (social work, dieticians, RNs, counselors) with which I work?

APC, along with the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC), Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education (CAPPE/ACPEP), National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC) and National Association of Jewish Chaplains (NAJC), has approved a set of Common Standards for Professional Chaplaincy. Within those standards is a requirement of 50 hours of continuing education and/or professional development to maintain certification as a professional chaplain.

The standard of 50 hours is based on the intention that the common standards should be treated as the basis for the professional functioning of a chaplain. The number of hours and the reporting requirements for other professionals, such as nurses, social workers, dietitian, or counselors, are developed in accordance with the overall scope of the standards for their respective disciplines.

The [Common Standards for Professional Chaplaincy](#) can be found on the APC Web site under Professional Resources, Reading Room. The standard for continuing education can be found in Section IV: Professional, MNT2: *Document fifty (50) hours of annual continuing education*.

In addition, APC no longer maintains Certified CEs (CCEs). As a result, a much wider range of activities can potentially count as CEs, whereas colleagues from other disciplines must complete a certain number of pre-approved or certified CEs. This freedom to choose from a wide variety of potential educational opportunities seeks to empower board certified chaplains, provisional certified chaplains and associate certified chaplains to best tailor their individual CEs to address what is most effective and helpful for them.

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4. Can you reject anything I include in my continuing education report?

Yes. The program offers chaplains great latitude and creativity in selecting what they need. However, all reported CE must 1) be "educational" in nature, 2) relate to the function of advancing professional chaplaincy skill, and 3) be accountable under the methodologies outlined and the Common Standards for Professional Chaplaincy. To ensure this happens, APC oversees the continuing education hours submitted. There will be random reviews of CE reports to verify that the reported continuing education hours have a direct correlation to one's professional development as a chaplain.

Some items that have counted in previous years may no longer fit within the continuing education guidelines. Examples of items now excluded are: daily or weekly inter-disciplinary patient care rounds during which staff discuss patients' care plans and their discharge; supervision of CPE students or employees; and teaching a Bible study or other type of religious study.

Examples of things now included are: case conferences where an educational presentation is made or peer-reviewed literature is shared or utilized; hospital-wide multi-disciplinary grand rounds; and presentations of professional chaplaincy didactics to students or staff.

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5. What if I'm Not a Traditional Staff Chaplain?

Professional chaplains serve in widely diverse settings, including (but not limited to) health care, long-term care, schools, colleges, law enforcement, prisons, workplaces and mental health organizations. APC celebrates the diversity of our membership and seeks to honor each individual's professional and educational needs.

Regardless of the setting in which a BCC works, one should be able to answer two questions when discerning the appropriateness of a continuing education activity:

1) What does my unique perspective as a chaplain/ pastoral caregiver contribute to the overall care of clients - including patients, residents, staff, employees, students, community members – anyone who we serve in a helping capacity?

2) How can this particular activity enhance my performance in this role?

The 29 competencies for Board Certification, which are outlined in the [Common Standards for Professional Chaplaincy](#), provide excellent guidance for identifying areas in which chaplains play a distinctive role. If you participate in an activity that augments your competency in any of these areas, then it is likely eligible for Continuing Education credit.

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6. What are grand rounds, and why ARE they counted as CE, whereas interdisciplinary rounds are not?

In CPE lingo, grand rounds are closest to what we came to know as "didactics." Grand rounds are part of a medical model of continuing education, which require the presence of a teacher or expert in the subject matter. This is a formal presentation, which may or may not involve a discussion of specific patients. For example, a "lunch and learn" program in which a clinical ethicist delivers a talk outlining the ethical issues involved in a group of his cases would qualify as grand rounds. A discussion of these same issues by the staff at interdisciplinary rounds, at which no expert is present, might be very informative and lead to a formal ethics consult, but would not qualify for CE credit.

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7. Why are my hours limited for spiritual direction, retreats, personal therapy, professional development supervision and service to APC?

These hours are limited in order to allow room in the base of 50 continuing education hours for a broad range of continuing education.

Spiritual direction, retreats, personal therapy, professional development supervision and service to APC are important components of the professional and personal development of a chaplain. We encourage all chaplains to engage in these disciplines as needed and helpful. Chaplains are welcome to list all of their time in these disciplines. However, only the allotted number of hours (4) can count toward the required 50 hours of CE.

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8. Does any type of therapy count toward CE hours?

No. The therapy must be formal and structured, and it must be geared toward professional growth and balance. For example, if in response to a peer review, you are encouraged to seek some counseling concerning an issue that is getting in the way of your work as a chaplain, then this would count. If you and your partner are experiencing a rough patch and go to a couple's weekend counseling seminar, then that therapy time would not count.

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9. I can use up to 10 hours per year of my service time to APC. What does this mean?

This means that if you are on an APC/BCCI committee, commission, council or state leadership team; serve on a certification committee; volunteer at the annual conference; or serve on the board of directors, you can use up to 10 hours of your actual volunteer time to APC toward your 50 total CE hours. For example, if you are a state membership chair and spend approximately 10 hours a month (120 for the year) for these duties, you can use 10 of the hours on your annual continuing education report. If you served on a certification committee, you can use the preparation time and actual committee meeting time, up to 10 hours.

10. If I am an associate certified chaplain, are the numbers of hours I count different than the hours for a board certified chaplain?

No. Both associate certified chaplains and board certified chaplains must report at least 50 hours of continuing education per year through participation in a broad range of educational experiences.

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11. If I am a provisional certified chaplain, are the numbers of hours I count different than the hours for a board certified chaplain?

No, a provisional certified chaplain is required to accumulate at least 50 hours of continuing education per calendar year through participation in a broad range of educational experiences. The same CE guidelines apply.

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12. Can I still print the Annual Summary of Continuing Education Hours form and send it in as I have always done?

Yes.

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13. How do I submit my form electronically?

Download the Word Document “Annual Summary of Continuing Education Hours” form and save it to your computer. Record CE throughout the year on this document. At the end of the year, attach the completed document to an e-mail and send it to info@professionalchaplains.org. Be sure to retain a copy of the form for your records. You do not need to submit CE certificates or other supporting documentation.

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14. Should I send in my form once I reach 50 hours?

You may send it in once you reach 50 hours but it is recommended to keep the form all year, documenting all continuing education, so it can be used to review with your administrator and to make decisions about continuing education for the following year. The completed form can be e-mailed, mailed or faxed to the national office.

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15. What if I am certified by ACPE as well as BCCI?

To assist those who hold certifications with both ACPE and BCCI, the two organizations have instituted the following policy for maintenance of certification materials:

- ACPE will accept BCCI's continuing education form.
- BCCI will accept ACPE's peer review form.

CPE supervisors, please review the BCCI Continuing Education Guidelines for Methodology 3, [Teaching](#).

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16. Why am I required to have 5 hours of research-based continuing education?

As part of its strategic plan, APC is working to transform the profession by creating research literate chaplains who practice research-informed and ultimately evidence-based chaplaincy care for the benefit of those receiving care in various clinical settings. The profession is at a critical juncture; health care institutions are focusing on patient-centered outcomes, our fellow clinicians use and expect evidence-based practices, and chaplaincy largely lacks these components. To support research by and about chaplains, and promote research literacy among chaplains, the APC board approved the recommendations of the Research Task Force, Quality in Chaplaincy Care Committee and Education Committee to require certified chaplains to participate in a minimum of 5 hours per year of research-based continuing education activities. Such activities include reading, writing, presenting and conducting research, and attending research-based educational events. This requirement takes effect January 1, 2015 and will continue going forward.

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