

Accreditation: Stumbling Block or Avenue to Exploration?

Karrie Oertli, Chair

ACPE Accreditation Commission

There seems to be a pervasive myth that, somehow, ACPE Standards and accreditation processes limit the creation of new CPE centers because of their hospital-centric bias. This article will discuss some interpretation of this dynamic and also invite feedback from you about specifics that you may have found within the Standards for reflection.

At a recent meeting of the Accreditation Commission, we reviewed some of the Standards for this very issue. We found really only one Standard that uses terms that brought some concern (Standard 304 identifies “patients” and “clinical records”), but other than that, the Commissioners quickly found ways to look at the Standards with different eyes that will allow creative centers to get accredited without changes in the Standards or accreditation processes.

It may very well be that we CPE Supervisors have created unintentional blinders for ourselves because of the reality that most CPE centers are located within hospital settings. This may have led to our limited interpretation for some standards. Let’s take a look at the Standards related, for example, to interdisciplinary involvement. Standard 303.3 requires “interdisciplinary consultation and teaching within the program(s) provided by adjunct faculty and/or guest lecturers.” We might first think that this would have to be a medical interdisciplinary team, and it could be exactly that within a hospital. For a CPE center located within a community center, for example, the interdisciplinary team could just as easily be comprised of a social worker, an attorney, a homeless shelter director, a parish nurse, and an elementary school teacher. It is really incumbent upon us to stretch our minds outside our “boxes” and use our abilities to envision new possibilities for ourselves.

If you find that there are Standards or accreditation processes that are restricting formation of new CPE centers, please let your regional standards representatives or accreditation chairs know, so that we can attend to these biases.

It is important to note that with those New Generations Projects that have been approved, little variance from Standards was required. What this says to the organization is that with no change, our Standards and accreditation processes are well poised to support new ventures of CPE.

The Accreditation Commission is committed to assisting you in brainstorming about possibilities that you might engage as you explore new dimensions of offering CPE to a broader community. Take advantage of the New Generations Project (look under “Resources” on the ACPE webpage for the application) to think about different ways to extend CPE!

Karrie Oertli, Chair, ACPE Accreditation Commission, is also a CPE Supervisor at Integris Baptist Medical Center, Oklahoma City, OK. She may be contacted at karrie.oertli@integrisok.com.