

**OFFICE OF PRACTICE AND LEARNING**  
**CONTINUING EDUCATION**  
**PROGRAM GUIDE**



**TEXAS**  
Health and Human  
Services

Texas Department of State  
Health Services

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## About Texas Department of State Health Services

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) has been restructured to sharpen our focus on public health. Our job is to promote and protect the health of people, and the communities where they live, learn, work, worship, and play. We understand no single entity working by itself can improve the health of all Texans. We must all work together to create a better system that includes prevention, intervention, and effective partnerships.

### *Our Vision*

A Healthy Texas

### *Our Mission*

To improve the health, safety, and well-being of Texans through good stewardship of public resources, and a focus on core public health functions.

### *Our Values*

- Lead with a vision.
- Driven by science and data.
- Partner with a purpose.
- Engage and connect as a team.

### *Our Goals*

- Improve and support health outcomes and well-being for individuals and families.
- Ensure efficient access to appropriate services.
- Protect the health and safety of vulnerable Texans.
- Continuously enhance efficiency and accountability.

## About the Office of Practice and Learning

We are the home for the agency's health profession development function, including operating a Preventive Medicine Residency; providing continuing education services for physicians, nurses, and other healthcare professionals; facilitating educational opportunities and internship experiences.

### *Our Mission*

The mission of the Office of Practice and Learning is to develop and strengthen the Texas public health workforce.

## *Our Services*

The office of Practice and Learning supports the following programs and services:

- Continuing Education Program
- DSHS Grand Rounds
- Internships
- Preventative Medicine Residency
- Public Health Workforce Training
- Texas Medical and Research Library
- Texas Public Health Fellowship

## **About the Continuing Education Program**

The Texas Department of State Health Services Continuing Education (CE) Program is an Accredited Provider of CE credits and contact hours for educational activities. The CE Program follows the, [Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education](#) to ensure that accredited continuing education serves the needs of patients and the public, is based on valid content, and is free from commercial influence.

## *Our Mission*

To promote continuous professional development through educational activities for healthcare professionals aimed to improve patient care and health outcomes.

## *Our Services*

The CE Program provides credits and contact hours for Texas DSHS and Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) sponsored activities and external partner organizations. External organizations wishing to offer CE credits or contact hours for professional development learning activities supported by the CE Program must partner with a DSHS or a HHSC program to plan and implement their activity.

## **Types of Education Credits and Contact Hours Offered**

The DSHS CE Program is an Accredited Provider of CE credits or contact hours as applicable to the disciplines listed in Table 1.

Ethics credits are currently available for physicians, social workers, licensed marriage family therapists, licensed professional counselors, and licensed psychologists upon meeting specific criteria based on the target audience.

**Table 1.**

**Nurses:** Nursing Continuing Professional Development (NCPD) Contact Hours

*Advanced Practice Nurse (APRN)*

*Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN)*

*Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)*

*Registered Nurse (RN)*

Accredited by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC)

**Physicians:** Continuing Medical Education (CME) Credits

*Doctor of Medicine (MD)*

*Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO)*

Accredited by the Texas Medical Association (TMA)

**Certified Health Education Specialists (CHES)**

**Master Certified Health Education Specialists (MCHES)**

Accredited by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc. (NCHEC)

**Certified Public Health Professionals (CPH)**

**Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFT)**

**Licensed Psychologists (LP)**

**Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC)**

**Registered Sanitarians (RS)**

**Social Workers (SW)**

*Licensed Baccalaureate Social Worker (LBSW)*

*Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW)*

## Types of Continuing Education Activities

The CE Program provides support in offering CE credits and contact hours for the following types of professional development and learning activities:

- Enduring Materials
- Joint Providership
- Regularly Scheduled Series (RSS)
- Repeat Activities
- Single Activity

CE Program supported activities require submission of the [Pre-Application Form](#) at least 90 days before the start date of the first learning activity.

A CE Administrator will contact the Activity Planner within 5 days of receipt of the [Pre-Application Form](#) to provide approval, the activity specific documentation packet (Doc Pac) with instructions and next steps; or information on why the activity was not approved with guidance on what is needed for approval for CE Program support.

Once approval for CE Program support is confirmed, the CE Administrator will be the CE Program primary point of contact for the activity and will channel all communication related to the activity through the Activity Planner designated in the [Pre-Application Form](#).

The CE Administrator will provide guidance and coaching as needed to support the public health workforce in providing quality impactful professional development continuing education activities that meet required CE accreditation standards.

General information about each type of CE activity the CE Program supports is outlined in this guide. Specific detailed information, requirements, and forms are outlined in individualized activity specific Doc Pac's.

The CE Administrators have the authority to suspend the activity planning process if any of the requirements are not met as outlined in this guide and in the activity specific Doc Pac. This includes not meeting established timelines for completing the pre and post required activity specific forms.

## **Enduring Materials**

An educational activity that includes one or more of the following formats or platforms accessible on-demand without a specific time or physical location needed for participation and completion.

- Archived webinars
- Audio recordings

- Online activities
- Podcasts
- Video recordings

Enduring Materials require completion of the [Pre-Application Form](#) at least 90 days before the date of initially offering the Enduring Materials.

Submission of the Enduring Materials Doc Pac is due at least 60 days before the first date of offering the Enduring Materials.

The Enduring Materials Doc Pac must be reviewed, updated, and resubmitted every three years for renewal and requires completion of the [Pre-Application Form](#) by the Activity Planner at least 90 days prior to expiring.

## Joint Providership

Joint Providerships are learning activities planned, developed, and implemented collaboratively by DSHS or HHSC programs and one or more external organizations. Joint Providerships must be live in-person or live virtual activities.

Joint Providerships must be in alignment with the DSHS mission. The Activity Planner must be a DSHS or HHSC employee, not a contractor, and will need to gain approval from a DSHS or HHSC executive to offer a Joint Providership activity.

The external organizations of a Joint Providership cannot be ineligible companies. Companies that are ineligible are those whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients.

Joint Providerships require completion of the [Pre-Application Form](#) at least 90 days before the first date of the Joint Providership learning activity.

Submission of the CE Program Joint Providership Doc Pac is due at least 60 days before the first date of the Joint Providership learning activity.

## Regularly Scheduled Series

Regularly Scheduled Series (RSS) are recurring series of professional development learning activities with multiple live sessions, usually offered weekly, monthly, or quarterly. Topics, content, and objectives are different at each session. An RSS may be live in-person or live virtual.



Examples include grand rounds, journal clubs, lecture series, and other learning activities that occur on a regularly scheduled standing date and time.

RSS activities require completion of the [Pre-Application Form](#) at least 90 days before the date of the first RSS activity.

Submission of the CE Program RSS Activity Doc Pac is due at least 60 days before the date of the first educational activity, including the schedule for subsequent activities.

The RSS Pac must be reviewed, updated, and resubmitted annually for renewal and requires completion of the [Pre-Application Form](#) by the Activity Planner at least 90 days prior to expiring.

### **Repeat Activity**

A live in-person or live virtual activity occurring multiple times without changes to the Professional Practice Gap (PPG), content, learning objectives and outcomes.

Repeat Activities require completion of the [Pre-Application Form](#) at least 90 days before the date of the first or initial activity.

Submission of the CE Program Repeat Activity Doc Pac is due 60 days before the first or initial activity date, and a Repeat Activity Request Form must be submitted at least 30 days before each Repeat Activity.

Submission of a new CE Program Repeat Activity Doc Pac is needed if there are changes to any of the following; the PPG, content, learning objectives, or outcomes.

### **Single Activity**

A Single Activity is a live in-person or live virtual activity occurring once.

A Single Activity with no changes to the PPG, content, learning objectives, or outcomes can be transitioned to a Repeat Event with guidance from the CE Administrator.

Single Activities that are repeated but have different content, objectives, and presenters require submission of a new Doc Pac.

Single Activities require completion of the [Pre-Application Form](#) at least 90 days before the date of the first or initial activity.

Submission of the CE Program Single Activity Doc Pac is due 60 days before the start date of the activity.

## Continuing Education Contact Hours, Credits and Certificates

CE contact hours and credits are calculated by subtracting the total minutes spent on non-educational time from the total number of minutes for all sessions in the activity, divided by 60. The time allotted to each session is rounded to the nearest quarter hour (0.25).

$$\frac{(\text{total minutes for all sessions}) - (\text{total minutes spent on non-educational activities})}{60}$$

- Credit and contact hours awarded commensurate with participation.
- Certificates and credit letters are created by the CE Administrator assigned to the activity and will be sent to the Activity Planner before the activity occurs.
- Activity participants must complete an activity evaluation to receive a CE certificate awarding CE credit, contact hours, or a certificate of attendance.
- Certificates may be distributed at the end of the activity or sent to participants through email by the Activity Planner within 14 days after the activity date.

## CE Program Responsibilities

1. Review pre-activity applications for approval.
2. Channel all communication through one primary point of contact Activity Planner.
3. Provide orientation of the CE program processes and requirements to the Activity Planner as needed.
4. Conduct review for approval of activity requirements ensuring the Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education are met.
5. Establish approved evaluation methods in collaboration with Activity Planner.
6. Calculate and award credits or contact hours as applicable.
7. Conduct record keeping activities.
8. Suspend CE support if CE Program requirements are not met as outlined in this guide and in activity specific documents Doc Pac's.

## Activity Planner Role and Responsibilities

1. One Activity Planner must be designated as the primary point of contact and must be a DSHS or HHSC employee.
2. Complete the [\*Pre-Application Form\*](#) at least 90 days before the first date of the planned learning activity is scheduled to occur.
3. Ensure the Planning Committee, speakers, content, learning objectives, and outcomes of the activity promotes, aligns, and does not conflict with the Mission and Vision of Texas DSHS.
4. Verify conflicts of interests and advertisements are not included in the presentation materials and that no members of the Planning Committee or speakers are owners or employees of an ineligible company.
5. Identify, mitigate, and disclose all financial relationships during the planning and implementation phase of educational activities.
6. Disclose and inform to learners of the presence or absence of financial relationships for all individuals in a position to control content of the educational activity before the activity starts.
7. Obtain completed and signed Disclosures of Financial Interests forms from each member of the Planning Committee and each presenter.
8. Obtain biographical information form, resume, or curriculum vitae from each presenter, author, and content expert, and send it to CE Administrator.
9. Ensure the CE Program is informed of monetary support received for the activity and that proper agreements have been signed as applicable.
10. Ensure State of Texas Health and Human Services employees that are members of the Planning Committee or presenters do not accept monetary support as per Penal Code § 36.07, ([\*Reference Guides \(state.tx.us\)\*](#)).
11. Use CE Program provided accreditation and designation statements.
12. Submit accurate and complete post-activity attendance documentation, and summative evaluation information.
13. Send out CE certificates provided by the CE Program to all participants who complete an activity evaluation, even if they do not request one.
14. Inform CE Program if the duties of the Activity Planner transfer to someone else.
15. Ensure that all required documentation for activity is completed accurately and submitted to the CE Program by the dates outlined in this guide.

## The Planning Committee Roles and Responsibilities

The Planning Committee must consist of at least two people with one designated as the Activity Planner and at least one content expert. Additional members may include content reviewers, authors, presenters, and beta testers (for Enduring Materials activities only).

If seeking to offer Nursing Continuing Professional Development (NCPD) contact hours, a Nurse Planner must be on the Planning Committee. The CE Program will assign Nurse Planners for applicable activities.

If seeking to offer Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) contact hours, the CE Program will assign CHES reviewers if one is not on the Planning Committee for applicable activities.

If seeking to offer ethics credits for MDs or DOs, a physician must approve the activity objectives as appropriate for ethics credits or contact hours.

Responsibilities of the Planning Committee:

1. Channel all communication through the Activity Planner.
2. Completion of environmental assessments to identify the PPG, specific problem, or opportunity for improvement that can be addressed through professional development educational activities.
3. Selection of the most appropriate type of learning activity to meet the learning objectives and desired outcomes with assistance from the CE Administrator.
4. Assist in development of an appropriate method of evaluation.
5. Development of an agenda for activities lasting longer than 3 hours.
6. Development of conference packets, booklets, or handouts as applicable
7. Development of save the dates announcements, flyers, marketing, and other types of activity announcements.
8. Development of content script for Enduring Materials.
9. Development of Enduring Materials modules and finding the appropriate online learning platform (e.g., learning management system).
10. Completion of CE Program required forms as applicable to role and activity.

## Educational Design Table

An Educational Design Table form with instructions will be sent to the Activity Planner with the Activity Doc Pac once approval of the [Pre-Application Form](#) is confirmed.

The CE Administrator welcomes questions throughout the CE process and can help guide the Activity Planner in completing the Activity Doc Pac as needed.

## Professional Practice Gap

The Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) defines a professional practice gap (PPG) as the difference between healthcare processes or outcomes observed in practice, and those potentially achievable based on current professional knowledge.

According to the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Accreditation Criteria, Self-Learning Guide, V.1.0, 8.6.21, learning activities must include a description of the PPG identified by the Planning Committee they aim to address with the planned learning activity to include supporting evidence validating the PPG.

Development of acceptable documentation of a PPG includes the following information and considerations:

- Provide a brief description of the professional practice gap (PPG) identified for improvement that the learning activity is designed to address for your specific learners.
- What is the problem or opportunity that needs to be addressed by this activity?
- It can be as simple as a one-sentence response that includes what the specific problem or opportunity is followed by what is potentially achievable based on current professional knowledge.
- Although it is not required to include the target audience in the PPG statement, it is best practice to ensure it can impact the education activity's gap.
- How is the evidence (e.g., data, trends in literature) informing you that a professional practice gap exists for the target audience?
- What data supports the need for this educational activity or intervention?
- The evidence statement should include the Planning Committee's analysis of the data, not just data sources.

See examples below of types of evidence to support a PPG to validate the need for the activity:

- Survey data from stakeholders, target audience members, subject matter experts or similar
- Evidence from quality studies and or needs assessments
- Evaluation data from previous education activities
- Trends in literature
- Direct observation

See example of a PPG statement in Table 3.

### Table 3.

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**PPG Problem Statement:** Hepatitis C screening rates are below the national benchmark in several state funded clinics based on most current state surveillance data available.

Hepatitis C screening rates can be improved by clinicians using current evidence-based hepatitis C screening protocols.

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**PPG Evidence Statement:** After review of current state hepatitis C surveillance data and conducting a root cause analysis with a focus group consisting of clinicians representing each of the eleven regional health service delivery areas, it was identified that there is inconsistency across the state in the use of evidence-based hepatitis C screening protocols. The focus group also conducted a literature review to find out if using screening protocols increases screening rates.

The literature review did confirm this theory in several journal articles. One example is Universal Screening for Hepatitis C Virus in the ED Using a Best Practice Advisory concluded that using a best practice alert hepatitis C screening protocol can dramatically increase screening rates, *Ford, J. S., Chechi, T., Toosi, K., Mahmood, B., Meehleis, D., Otmar, M., Tran, N., & May, L. (2021). Universal Screening for Hepatitis C Virus in the ED Using a Best Practice Advisory. Western Journal of Emergency Medicine, 22(3), 719. DOI: [10.5811/westjem.2021.1.49667](https://doi.org/10.5811/westjem.2021.1.49667).*

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## Educational Need

The underlying educational need should align with and be supported by the PPG, and the evidence to support the PPG and desired learning outcomes. The following

questions will help to guide the Planning Committee in choosing an applicable underlying need(s). Why do learners need this education?

- Is the PPG related to what they do not know (knowledge)?
- Is the PPG related to what they do not know how to do (skill)?
- Is the PPG related to what they do not know how to apply or implement into practice (performance)?

## Learning Outcomes and Objectives

Outcomes and objectives are often confused and used interchangeably yet are different in educational design.

A learning outcome describes the overall purpose or goal of participation in an educational activity. Activities should be planned with a measurable learning outcome in mind. The learning outcome is identified from the gap analysis and reflects the desired state versus the current state.

The learning outcome statement needs to be written in measurable terms and include the method that the outcome is measured by.

The learning outcome must be tied to the PPG and the underlying educational need. For example, if the underlying need is knowledge, the outcome should be related to measuring a change in the learner's knowledge.

Use the following questions below and shown in Table 4., to guide the Planning Committee in developing applicable PPGs and learning outcomes:

- What is the measurable goal or outcome that this activity sets out to achieve?
- What should the learner(s) know, show, or be able to do at the end of the activity?
- What will be measured when the learner completes the activity?

**Table 4.**

Required Element	Guiding Questions
Current State	What is currently happening?
Desired State	What should be happening?
Identified PPG	Difference between what is and what should be?
PPG in Knowledge, Skill, or Practice	What is the root cause of the problem?
Methods used to identify PPG	What evidence do you have to validate that the PPG exists?
Learning Outcome	What do you want learners to be able to do because of participating in this activity?
Method of Evaluation	How will you measure the change?

A learning objective defines the content of an educational activity and highlights the topics discussed during the presentation. Learning objectives are focused on content delivery. Learning objective statements include measurable verbs. See examples below. A full list of measurable verbs can be found in: [Blooms Taxonomy - Best.pdf \(utica.edu\)](#).

- Analyze
- Discuss
- Demonstrate
- Examine
- Explain
- Identify
- List
- Name
- State

Objectives should be free of vague or ambiguous words or phrases. The following lists notoriously ambiguous words or phrases which should be avoided so that the intended outcome is concise and explicit. See detailed list in: [Blooms Taxonomy - Best.pdf \(utica.edu\)](#).

- Realize
- Intelligence
- Comprehend
- Know
- See
- Memorize
- Think
- Experience
- Understand

See examples of learning outcomes and objectives in Table 5.



**Table 5.**

Learning Outcome	Learning Objective
Knowledge: Demonstrate knowledge of evidence-based hepatitis C screening protocols by passing a post-activity test with a score of $\geq 80\%$ .	List three reasons hepatitis C screening is important.
Skill: Correctly identify evidence-based hepatitis C screening protocols by analyzing three different case studies.	Discuss risk factors for hepatitis C transmission.
Performance: Learners will self-report intent to screen patients for hepatitis C using an evidence-based protocol in the post-activity evaluation.	Demonstrate how to find current evidence-based hepatitis C screening protocols.

## Exhibitors, Advertisers, and Sponsors

Accredited continuing education must be kept separate from marketing by companies including advertising, sales, exhibits, and promotion, and from nonaccredited education offered at the same time as accredited continuing education.

- Exhibitors and advertisers are organizations who wish to advertise outside of a continuing education area, usually at tables manned by a company representative.
- Sponsors are any organization that provides monetary support in exchange for having their name advertised at the activity.
- Arrangements to allow exhibitors or sponsors to advertise or exhibit in association with accredited education must not:
  - Influence any decisions related to the planning, delivery, and evaluation of the education.
  - Interfere with the presentation of the education.
  - Be a condition of the provision of financial or in-kind support from exhibitors or sponsors for the education.
- Participants must be able to easily distinguish between accredited education and other activities.
- Educational materials that are part of accredited education (such as slides, abstracts, handouts, evaluation mechanisms, or disclosure information) must not

contain any advertising produced by or for an exhibitor or sponsor, including corporate or product logos, trade names, or product group messages.

- Information distributed about accredited education that does not include educational content, such as schedules and logistical information, may include advertising by or for an exhibitor or sponsor.
- Exhibitors and sponsors may not provide access to, or distribute, accredited education to participants.
- Exhibit placement and location must not interfere with the CE activities and must be physically separated from the places in which accredited educational content are held for example, for face-to-face live meetings, separated by a wall, in a different room, or on a separate floor of the meeting venue, for virtual formats, on a different tab of the virtual meeting's website, away from CE content.
- Product-promotion material or product-specific advertisement of any type is prohibited in or during CE activities.
- Advertising, exhibits, and satellite symposia held by an ineligible company cannot occur in the educational space within 30 minutes before or after CE content.
- Commercial companies are prohibited from displaying and sharing information about their services and products in areas where the accredited learning activity occurs.
- All promotion or discussion of products and services must be done in the designated exhibit space.
- Representatives of ineligible companies are not allowed to engage in sales or promotional activities while in the accredited educational program space.
- Social activities that are funded by commercial promotion cannot occur at the same time, nor take precedence over CE content.
- Signs, table tents, podium signs, and centerpieces regarding commercially promoted social activities are prohibited from being placed inside the education space.
- Any mention of exhibits i.e., information about their location, hours, or scheduled exhibit breaks cannot be listed the same space or time as educational content and must be designated with a note stating: "Please note non-CE promotional activities."
- Activity planners or their representatives are responsible for monitoring on-site activity, intervening as necessary in any possible violations, in order to ensure that the commercial promotion requirements are appropriately followed.

- Participants must not be presented with advertising while engaged in the accredited educational activity.
- Participants must be able to engage with the accredited education without having to click through, watch, listen to, or be presented with product promotion or product-specific advertisement.

## General Guidelines

The following list summarizes the Do's and Don'ts that apply to continuing education activity planning.

- Do contact the CE Program for help as needed via email to [CE.Service@dshs.texas.gov](mailto:CE.Service@dshs.texas.gov).
- Do complete a [Pre-Application Form](#) least 90 days in advance of your activity.
- Do ensure the CE Activity is evidence-based and aligns with the DSHS Mission.
- Do limit and spell out words before using acronyms.
- Do read the CE Activity Doc Pac requirements before completing the forms.
- Do use scientific generic names for products, medications, and medical devices.
- Do not use trade, brand names, or recommend off label uses of medications.
- Do not promote or favor a product or service.
- Do not use the term CEU's. We provide Continuing Education (CE) credits and contact hours. CEUs (continuing education units) are different; one CEU equals ten contact hours of participation in continuing education hours.

The CE Program staff welcomes questions and feedback. We look forward to potentially working with you to provide CE credits for your educational activity.

## References

[About DSHS | Texas DSHS, 2024](#)

[Blooms Taxonomy - Best.pdf \(utica.edu\), 2024](#)

[CE Educator's Toolkit \(accme.org\), 2023](#)

[CME Accreditation Resources \(texmed.org, 2024\)](#)

[Manual Updates | Accreditation | ANCC | ANA Enterprise \(nursingworld.org\), 2023](#)

[Office of Practice and Learning | Texas DSHS, 2024](#)

[Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education | ACCME, 2020](#)

[UCLA Course Planning Tip Sheet LearningOutcome-v-LearningObjective-052016.pdf](#)

## Contact Information

### **Continuing Education Program**

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**TEXAS**

Health and Human Services

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**Texas Department of State  
Health Services**

Continuing Education Program

**Continuing Education  
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