AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF NURSE PRACTITIONERS

AANP Continuing Education Policies
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AANP Continuing Education Policies

1.0   INTRODUCTION

AANP is a continuing education accrediting body. As such, AANP continuing education (CE) is not affiliated with or accredited by any other organization. AANP CE activity approval indicates that an educational activity has been reviewed by the AANP CE staff and/or volunteer reviewers who deem it educationally sound, relevant to nurse practitioner (NP) practice, and consistent with all AANP CE requirements. AANP CE standards are similar to those of the ACCME. AANP-approved programs must be fair and balanced (unbiased). In addition to planning balanced content on proposed topics, commercial funding and faculty-industry relationships must be disclosed to learners. The FDA, OIG, PhRMA, and ACCME have established guidance for industry supported scientific and educational events. The implementation of AANP-approved programs should be consistent with this guidance.

AANP approval of individual programs DOES NOT imply partnership or sponsorship of the activity. Use of the AANP logo is not permitted for program approval, as AANP is acting as the accreditor or approver, not the provider. Approval does not imply an agreement regarding implementation of the program and/or management of funds for programs approved. Providers interested in AANP having further involvement and sharing provider responsibilities should contact AANP CE department early in the activities development, to discuss and negotiate a potential partnership or co-providership.

2.0   PURPOSE

To establish and maintain a standard approach to reviewing and approving continuing education programs and thereby granting AANP CE Accreditation.

3.0   DEFINITIONS

1. **NP CE:** A systematic and structured educational process designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of NPs to provide patient-centered and evidence-based care within the milieu of the healthcare environment and ultimately promote positive outcomes. CE excludes activities designed for promotion of specific products, services, or devices. No promotional activities may occur during CE events. This includes distribution of product brochures or product information in conjunction with handouts. No slides or handouts developed by a commercial interest may be used during presentations. AANP CE is also used by NPs to meet regulatory and/or certification program CE requirements.

2. **NP CE Content Areas:** NP CE includes a wide range of activities designed to enhance learners' knowledge of direct and indirect care issues and should go beyond that obtained in their basic NP preparation. A non-exhaustive list of acceptable content areas includes: assessment, diagnosis, and management of conditions; health promotion and disease

prevention; legislative/policy issues affecting healthcare and practice; conversational foreign language relevant to healthcare; and practice management. For non-clinical content, the description should include a statement of how the topic enhances NP practice. Content area such as BLS/CPR, product promotion, self-improvement, and personal finance are not acceptable for NP CE credit.

3. **Pharmacology Content:** Pharmacology CE is designed to enhance the learner's ability to prescribe and or monitor patient on pharmacotherapy. It includes topics such as pharmacokinetics and clinical applications of drugs. Pharmacology credit must be supported by a program's objectives and detailed content. Incidental mention of drugs or a pharmacological treatment does not qualify for pharmacology credit.

4. **Enduring Materials:** Enduring materials are activities that "endure" and are accessible over an extended period of time, allowing for independent study. Enduring materials which are developed from a live meeting must have a separate application. Applications involving enduring materials (independent learning programs) must include a statement regarding how the credit request was determined. Examples include monographs, journal supplements, CD or web based activities.

5. **Continuing Education Series:** 1) Multi-component activity where all pieces build on one another or are specific to a single disease process; or 2) a program that is repeated but remains the same in content for each offering.

6. **Qualified NP Program Faculty:** A faculty member should have expertise based on education and experience on the topic and/or population covered. For example, a gerontological NP should not be faculty on a topic specific to pediatric patients. An NP should cover any content that is described as "NP implications" for a given topic. Pharmacology content should be presented by a prescriber (e.g. NP, MD/DO, PharmD) or pharmacist/pharmacologist. No employee of a pharmaceutical or device manufacturing company may serve as a faculty member for an AANP accredited program specific to a clinical disease state.

7. **Program Sponsor/Provider:** AANP defines the CE applicant as the activity's sponsor and/or provider. When programs receive commercial or other external funding, the grantor is designated as the "funder" or "supporter", not sponsor or provider. A pharmaceutical or device manufacturer may not serve as the sponsor or provider of an AANP-approved activity.

8. **Fair and Balanced Programming:** All programs bearing AANP accreditation must be designed and implemented to provide fair and balanced coverage of the topic, in keeping with AANP standards.

4.0   AANP STANDARDS

1. **AANP's standards are consistent with guidance from the FDA, OIG, ACCME, and PhRMA**.

1) Acknowledgment of Support: All educational grants or other support is to be acknowledged to learners. Any program announcements, invitations, or flyers should identify industry support, but without mention of specific products and without implying that the supporter is the program provider. Should grant funding be pending at the time of printing, a statement similar to the following should be included: *This course may receive support, in part, by educational grants from industry. At the time of printing, a complete listing of commercial supports was not available. Appropriate acknowledgement will be given to all supporters at the time of the educational activity*.

2) Faculty/Planner Disclosures: Any individual who may control an accredited activity's content must disclose any relationships with industry (speaker's bureaus, research, advisory boards, etc).

3) Generic drug names must be used in all CE activity/materials. When a generic drug is <u>first</u> <u>mentioned</u> in print, the brand name(s) may follow, in parentheses and in an unbolded font the same or smaller size than the surrounding text.

4) Off-label Discussions: Faculty must disclose any discussion of off-label, experimental, or investigational use of drugs or devices. This disclosure should be repeated at the time the actual discussion occurs within the activity.

5) Content Responsibilities: Providers maintain control of the content, faculty selection, and program evaluation. The use of slides, handouts, or other material developed by pharmaceutical or device manufacturers is prohibited.

6) Separation from Promotion: Educational activities are separated from promotional functions, so that detailing, promotion, and/or exhibiting does not occur in the same space.

7) Evaluation of Bias: Program evaluations include measurement of any perceived commercial or other bias in the activity.

2. AANP requires all submitters to sign a statement acknowledging that they are familiar with and have adhered to the AANP CE Standards and Policies.

5.0   INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM ACCREDITATION POLICY

I.   <u>CE Program Planning</u>

Required Planning Criteria: Certain criteria are universally expected by AANP, as well as by certification and regulatory bodies when considering the appropriateness and quality of a program. When developing your application, the following information should be made evident, regardless of the format used:

a. The intended audience
b. How the need for the topic was determined
c. Measurable, participant learning objectives describing anticipated change in knowledge, skills, or attitude. For multiple sessions, these objections should be session specific.
d. Summary of content directed to achievement of learning objectives
e. Educational and experiential qualifications of each speaker/faculty as they pertain to the topic
f. The evaluation plan including learners' perception regarding achievement of objectives, faculty expertise, teaching methods, and any perceived commercial bias

Fair and Balanced Programming: Whether or not providers receive educational grants from product manufacturers or vendors, they are responsible for ensuring that their program provides fair and balanced coverage of the topic. All educational grants or other support must be acknowledged to learners. Faculty, planners, and others who may control the activity's content must disclose any relationships with commercial entities. Faculty must disclose any discussion of off-label, experimental, or investigational use of drugs or devices. Providers must maintain control of the content, faculty selection, and program evaluation. Educational activities and promotional functions must be separated. Program evaluations must measure any perceived commercial or other bias in the activity.

All real and potential conflicts of interest must be resolved prior to program approval. All planners and program faculty (or contributors) must complete and submit a disclosure as part of the CE application. Programs with faculty serving on an industry speakers bureau in related clinical areas will be considered, providing that peer review or another approved method of conflict resolution is completed (see options below) and details submitted prior to the activity's accreditation. Peer review of program slides is required for activities covering the same clinical area as a faculty member's speakers bureau activities, when content includes therapeutic options beyond incidental mention of broad classes of drugs.

If a potential source of bias or conflict is identified while planning a program, the program planners must take measures to ensure that content is fair and balanced and provide a notation to describe the measures taken. AANP reviewers also assist in the process of ensuring fair and balanced content, as they consider the proposed content and faculty details and make recommendations, when warranted. In addition to the application forms, please submit samples of any program-related material including announcements, certificates, etc.

Options for conflict resolution include:
   a. Limit speaker and session to content not including therapeutic options (must send us revised objectives)
   b. Add a second speaker (without any commercial relationships) to present the content on therapeutic options (send us bio and disclosure)
   c. Replace the speaker with another qualified individual who is free of commercial relationships
   d. Submit session slides and content for a peer review to verify evidence-based, balanced presentation indicated
   e. Provide education session as an unaccredited education

II. CE Application Process

Required submission information:
   a. Program planning form
   b. Speaker bio-sketch form (to document experience/education related to topic, CVs are not accepted)
   c. Speaker disclosure form (to identify any potential conflict of interest , off label use, or experimental/investigational use of drugs/devices)
   d. Planner disclosure form

e. Program evaluation form (to measure program outcomes including any detected bias)
f. Certificate of completion
g. Program announcement (to depict correct way to acknowledge support)
h. Samples of any other program-related material, including all announcements.
i. Agenda and/or schedule required for programs greater than 10 contact hours or those with concurrent sessions.

Application Submission: Electronic application submission is the preferred method. Applications for programs of less than 16 contact hours will be accepted up to four (4) weeks prior to activity start date. Applications for programs of 16 or more contact hours must be submitted at least six (6) weeks in advance. "Hard copy" applications must be submitted in duplicate (2 complete copies) at least 6 weeks prior to the date on which the program will be offered. Expedited reviews will be conducted for electronic packets received at least two weeks prior to the first offering date and accompanied by an additional fee. No packet will be accepted less than two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled date of the program.

Expedited Reviews: Complete submissions received less than 4 weeks, but at least 2 weeks, prior to the program's start date and accompanied by the appropriate expedite will be reviewed within 2 weeks of receipt.

Applicant Categories: For purpose of CE Fees, applicants are categorized as AANP Group Members, Non-Profit 501(3) Organizations, and Others. To qualify as an AANP Group Member, the group's membership must be current. To qualify as a 501(c) organization, a copy of the entity's IRS letter must be submitted.

Fee Schedule: The current fee schedule is reflected in the posted AANP CE Application. AANP reserves the right to change the fee schedule with a six (6) week notice. In addition to the basic review fee, added fees are assessed for expedited review and handling of hard-copy submissions.

Payment of CE Fees: Payment must be received prior to review of a CE packet.

III. <u>Review and Approval Process</u>

Review Process: A member of the AANP CE staff promptly reviews all packets received. Submitters are contacted if additional information is needed. Based on the CE review, the submitter/provider is notified if the program is either "approved" or "not approved" before each program's initial presentation. Examples of reasons for non-approval include determination that the program: does not go beyond basic NP education, is deemed to be promotional, does not include qualified faculty, or is otherwise educationally unsound.

Pending language: Once accepted for review the following statement can be used in program materials: *This program is pending approval by the American Association of Nurse Practitioners.*

Approval Period: The approval period is for 2 years from the last day of the approval month, providing that no changes are made. At one year the Sponsor is responsible for review of the program's content and updating the information as needed.

Approval language: Once approved, sponsors/providers may use the following statement: *This program is approved for XX contact hour(s) of continuing education (which includes XX hour(s) pharmacology).* Prior to submission of the application, should use the following: *This program will be submitted to the American Association of Nurse Practitioners.* In addition, the following statement should accompany all AANP-approved activities: *This program was planned in accordance with AANP CE Standards and Policies and AANP Commercial Support Standard*

Appeals Process: Applicants may appeal the amount of credit awarded and/or determination of non-approval. To appeal a decision of the CE department, a written request must be received within 30 days of the approval or denial. The request must detail the basis for the appeal. Only the **original** application will be reviewed for an appeal.

AANP Logo: The AANP logo cannot be used on AANP approved programs for which AANP is not acting as an accrediting provider/partner. All logo use must be approved in advance, including those programs for which AANP is an accrediting provider/partner.

IV. **AANP CE Credit**

Contact Hours: The AANP contact hour is the equivalent to 60 minutes of learning. Contact hours and continuing education units (CEUs) are <u>not</u> interchangeable or synonymous; the term "CEU" should not be used in relation to AANP-approved CE credit.

AANP CE Program Minimum Credit: The recommended length for live AANP-approved CE programs is equivalent to at least one contact hour of learning. Exceptions should be supported by the activity description. No AANP CE Program will provide less than .25 contact hours (15 minutes of learning). Credit is awarded only for the educational presentation and for time devoted to questions and answers, which allows for open dialogue on the topic. Credit is not awarded for time spent in introductory remarks, breaks, product exhibits, or program evaluation.

AANP Credit Breakdown: AANP credit is based on total of individual components of an activity that an individual can earn. Unless otherwise requested, the approval is for the aggregate program.

Credit for Poster Session: CE credit may be approved for poster sessions held in conjunction with "live" programs of at least 1 contact hour in duration. The formula used to determine actual poster session credit awards 0.1 contact hour per 2 posters (i.e. 3 minutes/poster). There should be at least 6 posters submitted for credit. Poster credit application must include each poster's title, presenter(s) name/credentials, and objective(s).

Pharmacology Credit: On request, pharmacology CE credit will be identified. <u>The cover sheet must indicate the amount of pharmacology credit requested and pharmacology content clearly identified in the program description</u>. If pharmacology credit is requested after a submitted program has been reviewed and approved, a revised application, with the same time allowances for the review and the same fees, will be required.

Enduring CE Credit: Credit for print-pieces must be based on the Mergener formula (preferred), an alternate formula, or a pilot-test. A Mergener formula calculator is located online at http://touchcalc.com/calculators/mergener. Additionally, a paper version with the formula is located as Attachment 3 of the document located at: http://www.fda.gov/downloads/AboutFDA/CentersOffices/OfficeofMedicalProductsandTobacco/CDER/ManualofPoliciesProcedures/UCM263362.pdf. Alternatively, a pilot test may be done and must include the timed results from at least three learners who have not been involved in the activity's planning or development and are part of the intended audience. Identification of pilot participants by educational and professional credentials is required. Documentation of results and process by each pilot member must be included with application.

Credit for Post-Test Completion: Although post-test questions provide a final opportunity to reinforce learning on an enduring CE program, post-test questions are intended as a method to validate participation in an activity, not a primary learning tool. Therefore, the amount of credit that can be awarded for time spent in any post-test activity is limited to no more than 1.5 minutes per question. The amount of credit awarded for post-test completion should represent no more than 25% of the time required to otherwise complete the program or 15 minutes per activity, whichever is less.

Claimed Credit: Learners should claim credit only for the portion of the program they attended and successfully completed.

Withdrawal of Credit: AANP reserves the right to withdraw or rescind credit once approved, for situations such as listed below. In the event that credit is rescinded, the provider must contact learners and inform them that the CE is not valid. Examples for which credit may be withdrawn include any of the following:
   a. Failure of the planners or faculty to disclose relationship with a commercial entity
   b. Failure of the planner or faculty to disclose funding, support, or other assistance received for the activity
   c. Changes in the educational objectives, content, faculty, or methodology
   d. Evaluations indicating strong bias in content

CE Certificate: An AANP CE Certificate must include the following: Title of the program, AANP approval number, amount of credit granted, the name of the sponsor/provider, name of sponsor/provider contact, and date of award.

V.   Post Program Approval

Record Maintenance: Program providers must maintain records for at least 6 years. Records should include a copy of the approved program, any related announcement, program date/time,

participant roster, credit awarded, evaluation summary, certificate copy, and any related documents. Records may be maintained in hard- or electronic-format.

Submission of Post-Program Documents: Within 1 month of the program, a summary of the program evaluation and copy of attendance roster must be submitted to AANP for review. Rosters must include a count for total participants, total NP participants and a unique identifier (no SSN) for each individual. They must also include a statement validating that any speaker COI and off-label information was disclosed to the participants. Rosters containing participants from multiple disciplines must clearly identify those who are NPs. For programs that are repeated, the above reports are due at 1 month, at 1 year and again 1 month after the program is completed.

Release of Attendee Information: No information regarding NP attendees should be released to third parties, without permission of the learners

6.0   APPROVED PROVIDER ACCREDITATION POLICY

I.   <u>Approved CE Provider</u>

AANP Approved Providers are individuals or groups who have demonstrated the ability to design, implement, and evaluate continuing education programs for nurse practitioners without constant or close supervision. Prior to being granted approved provider status, an application packet, submitted with the appropriate review fee, has undergone external review by AANP Continuing Education Department, been judged to meet all established AANP CE criteria, and been granted a unique provider number. Approved providers are permitted to develop and provide an unlimited number of NP CE programs during the approval period. Approved providers may include individuals, associations, organizations, educational institutions, and other bodies**.**

Provider Criteria: AANP approved provider must demonstrate:

a. Experience in planning, implementing, and evaluating continuing education activities appropriate for NPs, and a philosophy of continuing education consistent with NP education.
b. The relationship (through organizational chart, mission statement, and/or job description) between the provider applicant and one or more individuals qualified to plan and oversee a continuing education program for NPs. At least one graduate-prepared NP should be involved in the planning and evaluation of every program bearing AANP credit.
c. A philosophy (through written policies and/or statements) of continuing education committed to principles of adult learning and enhancing the nurse practitioner's practice. There should be a statement specifying the appropriate content for NP continuing education and commitment that the content should exceed the learner's basic NP education
d. The means, through written policies and procedures, to efficiently implement a continuing education program, adhering to AANP standards and criteria for continuing education, as well as defined provider accountability.

e. Understanding of and intent to comply with AANP's CE standards/policies, as well as familiarity with the guidance provided by the FDA, OIG, PhRMA, and ACCME on industry-supported, accredited activities.

f. Financial resources to plan, implement, and evaluate CE programs.

Co-Providership: AANP Approved Providers may ONLY provide programs that they design and implement, including those involving co-providerships. A co-provider agreement specific to the individual program must be in place and document the responsibilities of each party. In order to qualify as a program's co-provider, the provider must be able to demonstrate involvement in determining the need and selecting faculty; planning, implementation, and evaluation of the educational activity; determining and awarding credit; and maintaining all records associated with the activity. AANP approved providers may NOT approve CE activities of others.

II.   Provider Program Planning

Provider NP planner: At least one master's or doctorally prepared NP should be involved in the planning and evaluation of every program bearing AANP credit. The qualifications of this individual(s) must be further established through submission of a curriculum vita.

Fair and Balanced Programming: Whether or not providers receive educational grants from product manufacturers or vendors, they are responsible for ensuring that their program provides fair and balanced coverage of the topic. All educational grants or other support must be acknowledged to learners. Faculty, planners, and others who may control the activity's content must disclose any relationships with commercial entities. Faculty must disclose any discussion of off-label, experimental, or investigational use of drugs or devices. Providers must maintain control of the content, faculty selection, and program evaluation. Educational activities and promotional functions must be separated. Program evaluations must measure any perceived commercial or other bias in the activity.

If a potential source of bias or conflict is identified while planning a program, the program planners must take measures to ensure that content is fair and balanced and that all real and potential conflicts of interest are resolved prior to program implementation. The identified conflict(s) and the solution measures should be documented in the program file.

Provider Program Evaluation: In addition to evaluating individual educational activities, approved providers must have a plan in place through which the overall continuing education program is evaluated, at least annually.

Provider Program Cancellations: Provider must share policies specifying:
a. how participants will be notified in the event of a course cancellation
b. method by which refunds will be made in cases of non-attendance
c. time period in which refunds will be made—full and partial refunds
d. how prospective participants will be made aware of this policy

It is expected that there be an identified and reasonable period of time during which persons registering for a program can cancel attendance and receive full or partial refund.

III. Provider Application Process

Application Submission: Complete Provider applications must be accompanied by the appropriate fee (indicated in the application packet) at least eight (8) weeks prior to the date on which the applicant wishes to provide the first AANP credit program. The application for Approved Provider Status will be reviewed with the appropriate review fee, which is non-refundable. The requirements for submission are included in both the initial and the renewal provider applications.

IV. Provider Approval

Provider Approval Period: The Initial Provider Approval Period is the two-year period from the date of initial approval, during which an approved provider offers continuing education for nurse practitioners as an AANP approved provider. During this time, the approved provider demonstrates the ability to comply with AANP procedures. Following the initial approval, subsequent approvals are generally for a period of five years.

Notification/Announcements of AANP Approved Provider Status: All potential and actual participants of educational activities implemented by an AANP approved provider must be notified of the provider's status as an approved provider. The designated statement should be included in all advertisements and program documents, along with the provider's AANP provider number. "*Provider Name* is accredited by the American Association of Nurse Practitioners as an approved provider of nurse practitioner continuing education. Provider number*: XXXXXX*." The notification should be located in the accreditation statement, simply identifying the provider's designation as an approved provider. However, providers must avoid any implication that AANP is involved in an individual program in any way (co-sponsor, partner, etc).

AANP Logo: Approved providers will receive a copy of the AANP logo, to accompany the accreditation statement. This logo must be used unaltered and only with the accreditation statement. The size of the logo should be proportional to the accreditation statement.

Program Approval Restriction: AANP Approved Providers may ONLY "provide" programs. AANP does not grant "approval authority" to others.

Withdrawal of AANP Approved Provider Credit: AANP reserves the right to withdraw, or rescind, credit offered by an AANP Approved Provider for situations such as listed below. In the event that credit is rescinded, the provider must contact learners and inform them that the AANP credit is no longer valid. Examples for which credit may be withdrawn include any of the following:
   a. Failure to involve an NP in the program's planning and evaluation
   b. Failure of the planners or faculty to disclose relationship with a commercial entity.
   c. Failure of the planner or faculty to disclose funding, support, or other assistance received for the activity.
   d. Credit for content deemed promotional in nature.

    e. Allowing CE credit for a program for which the Approved Provider did not participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation.

    f. Credit offered prior to or after the formal Approved Provider Period

V.   Post Provider Approval

Annual Provider Reports: At the end of each year, the provider will submit to AANP a list of all provided continuing education programs. AANP may elect to randomly select some number of programs from the list to review. On request, the provider will submit summary copies of all information maintained on the select programs within 30 days. Failure to comply with AANP policies and/or to maintain appropriate records may result in a variety of sanctions, including withdrawal of Provider status and/or program credit.

Notification of Provider Changes: AANP must be notified within 30 days of any significant changes in the accredited approver organization/entity. Examples of significant changes include, but are not limited to, change in ownership, administrator, address, NP planner(s), or change in other provider status.

7.0   PARTNERSHIP POLICY

AANP Partnership/Co-Sponsorship: Requests for AANP partnership/co-sponsorship of an educational activity must be received, discussed, and negotiated in the early planning phase for any accredited activity. In order for AANP to serve as an accrediting partner, AANP staff or designee must be involved in the activity's planning, development, implementation, and evaluation.

AANP CE Partnership Fees: AANP Partnership/Co-Sponsorship fees are available on request. In addition to the base partnership/royalty fees, the fees are based on complexity and scope of AANP activities/responsibilities.

AANP Partnership Requirements: As an accrediting provider, in order to serve as a partner/co-providership for a program, AANP must be involved in all stages of a program's planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Withdrawal of Credit: As with other AANP-approved programs, AANP reserves the right to rescind credit for co-sponsored activities if AANP standards are not met by partners.

8.0   AANP CE CENTER POLICY

AANP CE Center: Only programs developed by or in partnership with AANP will be posted on AANP CE Center.

CE Participation Fees: AANP members may access all AANP CE. While select activities may be available to non-members at no cost, the remainder may be accessed by non-members only after the required fee is paid. All AANP members have free access to all activities hosted on AANP CE Center.

AANP CE Tracker: All active AANP members are eligible to track CE earned through AANP's online CE Center and other programs such as the AANP National Conference through the online CE tracker – "My Portfolio". Additionally, members may upload copies of non-AANP CE certificates to maintain a current portfolio of CE credit earned.

AANP-Maintained Calendar and Listing of Activities: Only AANP-approved programs are eligible for listing in the AANP CE Calendar and/or the Listing of Independent Study Opportunities. In order for the program to be listed, the provider must request the listing and provide the necessary details.

Online Activity Pilot: For test purposes, all CE Center activities will be posted for a 3-day pilot period, during which processes will be tested and content reviewed for final copy.

Final Posting of CE Center Activities: CE Center activities must be received by the CE staff at least five days before the anticipated date for the activity to become active.

CE Center Activity Launch Dates: No online CE activity will be launched on a Friday or immediately before a holiday.