

**CPME 730**

**PROCEDURES FOR APPROVAL OF CONTINUING EDUCATION PROVIDERS IN PODIATRIC MEDICINE**

**Council on Podiatric Medical Education**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Council on Podiatric Medical Education (CPME) is an autonomous, professional accrediting agency designated by the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) to serve as the accrediting agency in the profession of podiatric medicine. The Council evaluates, accredits, and approves institutions and programs. The scope of the Council's approval activities extends to institutions throughout the jurisdiction of the United States and Canada.

The mission of the Council is to promote the quality of graduate education, postgraduate education, certification, and continuing education. By confirming these continuing education providers meet established standards and requirements, the Council serves to protect the public, podiatric medical students, residents, fellows, and doctors of podiatric medicine.

The Council was established by the APMA House of Delegates in 1918 and charged with formulating educational standards. The Council has been responsible for the approval of continuing education providers in podiatric medicine since 1977.

The Council has been authorized by APMA to approve continuing education providers that demonstrate and maintain compliance with the standards and requirements stated in CPME 720, *Standards and Requirements for Approval of Continuing Education Providers in Podiatric Medicine*. The Council and its Continuing Education Committee (CEC) base approval on programmatic evaluation and periodic review. The Council approves the provider itself rather than the provider's continuing education activities but reserves the right to review any or all of a provider's educational activities.

"Approval" is defined as the recognition accorded a continuing education provider that has demonstrated compliance with standards and requirements established by the Council. The approval process for continuing education providers in podiatric medicine involves: (1) development and submission of an application or petition materials documenting the ability to comply with the Council's standards and requirements; (2) review of the application or petition by the CEC; (3) forwarding of an approval recommendation from the CEC to the Council; (4) determination by the Council of initial or continued approval; (5) procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, and appeal of a proposed adverse approval action; and (6) annual follow-up of progress in improving the quality of the activities provided.

Recommendations and decisions relative to the approval process for providers of continuing education are the sole responsibilities of the CEC and/or the Council, as indicated in this publication. Neither Council staff, evaluators, individual members of the CEC or the Council, nor any other agent of the CEC or the Council is empowered to make or modify approval recommendations or decisions.

The Council reserves the right at any time to conduct on-site, virtual, and reverse evaluations of activities offered by applicant and approved providers, and to evaluate educational activities developed by applicant and approved providers. Providers must review CPME 720 prior to applying for approval or submitting petitions. Particular attention should be paid to the sections titled "About this Document" and "Information for Providers."

For a provider to be eligible for Council approval, the primary administrative office of the provider must be located within the jurisdiction of the United States or Canada and the preponderance of the provider's activities must be offered within the jurisdiction of the United States and/or Canada. The following approval procedures have been developed to assist potential and approved providers in preparing for initial or continuing approval and to guide the CEC and Council in their deliberations concerning the approval of continuing education providers.

Prior to adoption, all Council policies, procedures, standards, and requirements are disseminated widely in order to obtain information regarding how the Council's community of interest may be affected.

## **COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE CEC/COUNCIL AND PROVIDER**

The CEC and Council have adopted the following general policies related to communication with continuing education providers. Information related to specific correspondence (e.g., notification of approval actions) appears in the pertinent sections of this document. All correspondence and inquiries must be directed to the Council office.

**The CEC and Council require that the provider's director of continuing education be the individual responsible for the submission of all materials to Council staff related to applications, petitions, annual reports, and reconsiderations and for communication with the Council related to the application and approval processes.** All materials submitted by the provider must be submitted in a form or format as determined by Council, accompanied by a cover letter signed by the director. Signatures may be electronic or handwritten. The CEC, Council, and evaluators will not consider unsigned or signature-stamped correspondence or materials.

The CEC and Council correspond with the director of continuing education at the director's email and/or physical address as indicated on the provider's application, progress report, or most recent annual report. The provider's chief administrative officer is copied on all correspondence.

The provider is responsible for notifying the Council office in writing within 30 calendar days of substantive changes to the program. The provider must inform the Council of changes in areas including, but not limited to, the provider status, the appointment or resignation of the director of continuing education or chief administrative officer, the delivery format of activities, and significant changes in curricular structure. Notice of the appointment of a new director or new chief administrative officer must be submitted by an appropriate member of the provider's administrative staff.

The Council's continuing education documents and any proposed revisions to the documents are available on the Council's website. When the CEC or the Council develops a policy (e.g., interpretation of a particular requirement in a Council or CEC document), the policy is published on CPME's website.

Administration of the continuing education program falls directly under the purview of the director and the administrator of continuing education. As such, formal communication with CPME will always include these individuals. Communication with the administrative staff/program coordinator is not part of the formal communication process. The director of continuing education is ultimately

responsible for administration of the program.

## **CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

The CEC is responsible for reviewing applications, petitions for continued approval, evaluation reports, progress reports, and other information submitted by providers. CEC may modify its own policies and/or recommend to the appropriate ad hoc committee modifications in standards, requirements, and procedures for provider approval.

Composition of the CEC includes three representatives from approved providers of continuing education in podiatric medicine (selected by the Council), two representatives from the podiatric practice community (selected by the Council), one representative from state boards for examination and licensure (the Council may request that the Federation of Podiatric Medical Boards recommend a potential representative), one representative from the American Society of Podiatric Executives (ASPE) and at least two Council members (one of whom should be a public member). ASPE is requested to provide a list of names from which the Council chair selects an appointee for the Committee. The members of the Committee are appointed by the Council chair and confirmed by the Council. The Council and its staff administer the affairs of the CEC.

## **APPLICATION FOR PROVISIONAL APPROVAL OF A NEW CONTINUING EDUCATION PROVIDER**

### **Submission of the Application**

The Council encourages potential providers to contact Council staff early in the developmental stages of the program of continuing education should questions arise related to the Council's standards, requirements, and procedures. The potential provider must submit its application to the CEC; the Council does not accept applications directly from potential providers.

The Council recognizes that institutions, organizations, or individuals seeking approval do so voluntarily. The burden of demonstrating compliance with Council standards and requirements is the responsibility of the continuing education provider. An institution, organization, or individual seeking initial provisional approval must submit a completed CPME 715, *Application for Provisional Approval of a Continuing Education Provider in Podiatric Medicine*, accompanied by all required materials and the non-refundable application fee, to the Council office. The required materials are outlined on the application form.

The application is reviewed by Council staff to determine its completeness. The provider is informed whether the application appears to be complete. If the application is considered to be incomplete, the director of continuing education is notified in a timely manner with the request to submit the missing required information. If the completed application, required materials, and non-refundable application fee are received 60 days prior to the next scheduled CEC meeting, the prospective provider's application will be placed on the agenda. The entire review process for a new provider requesting provisional approval may require a period of four to six months from the time the application is reviewed by the CEC until an approval action is taken by the Council. Provisional approval of a continuing education provider is effective on the date on which the Council takes the approval action.

## **Withdrawal or Termination of the Application**

A provider submitting an application for provisional approval may withdraw its application without prejudice at any time before the Council takes an action on the application.

If the provider fails to formally respond within six months to written requests from Council staff and/or the CEC in a form and format as specified by Council staff for information to complete the application, Council staff will terminate the application.

Council staff will correspond with the director of continuing education and the provider's chief administrative officer to inform them the application has been terminated. The provider may submit a new application, required material, and non-refundable application fee after the application has been terminated.

## **Review by the Committee and Council**

Following review of a prospective provider's application, CEC has the following recommendation options: (1) grant provisional approval to the provider, with or without a request for additional information (progress report); (2) withhold approval; or (3) table the decision and request additional information.

The CEC and Council reserve the right to conduct an on-site, virtual, and/or reverse evaluation of any continuing education activity with the provider bearing full responsibility for expenses incurred. The CEC and Council reserve the right to survey participants or to collect information through any reasonable means considered necessary to facilitate an approval decision. The provider may request, at its own expense, an appearance before the CEC to submit additional information about its application and/or continuing education activities. The CEC and Council reserve the right to reject applications from and to deny approval as a provider to applicants that promote or provide clinical course work or learning experiences that do not have a sound scientific basis, proven efficacy, or ensure public safety.

The Council advises prospective providers to be in the process of planning an activity prior to applying for provisional approval. Activities that occur prior to the Council granting provisional approval must not allow learners to earn continuing education contact hours.

## **PETITION FOR CONTINUED APPROVAL FOR APPROVED PROVIDERS**

An approved provider seeking continued approval as a continuing education provider in podiatric medicine must submit CPME 735, *Petition for Continued Approval*, accompanied by required materials, and the petition fee to the Council office. The required materials are outlined on the petition form and the amount of the petition fee is invoiced. The petition materials are expected to present detailed information related to the provider's continuing education activities, allowing the provider to document continued compliance with the Council's standards and requirements for approval, as well as improvements in any previously identified areas of concern.

The provider's director of continuing education is the individual responsible for submission of the petition and communication with Council staff related to the petition. Council staff will review each

timely petition and may request additional information as needed. Once the petition and required materials are complete and if they are received by the due date, the provider's petition is placed on the CEC agenda. Council staff will inform a provider whose materials are incomplete that an appropriately completed petition must be submitted. Failure of an approved provider to submit a completed petition shall be cause for the Council to place the provider on probation.

### **Review by the Committee and Council**

Following review of a petition, the CEC has the following recommendation options: (1) approve the provider, with or without a request for additional information (progress report); (2) place provider on probation; (3) withdraw approval, for a provider already on probation; and (4) table a decision and request additional information from the provider.

The CEC and Council reserve the right to conduct an on-site, virtual, and/or reverse evaluation of any continuing education activity and to evaluate any educational activities, with the provider bearing full responsibility for expenses incurred. The CEC and Council also reserve the right to survey participants or to collect information through any reasonable means considered necessary to facilitate an approval decision. The provider may request, at its own expense, an appearance before the CEC to present additional information about its petition and/or continuing education activities.

### **ON-SITE, VIRTUAL, AND REVERSE EVALUATIONS**

The CEC and Council, at their discretion, may conduct an evaluation of the provider. Circumstances that might warrant an evaluation include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The continuing education provider has undergone a substantial change
- Major deterioration of the program of continuing education
- The provider has requested reconsideration of a proposed adverse approval action
- A formal complaint against an approved provider
- A new provider applying for provisional approval
- A provider on probation

The CEC and Council reserve the right to conduct an evaluation of the provider. The primary purpose of an evaluation is to review the provider's continuing education activities. The evaluation may have an impact on the provider's approval status.

### **Evaluation Guide**

If an evaluation is warranted, correspondence regarding the CEC action is addressed to the director of continuing education to assist in planning for the evaluation. The letter includes a copy of CPME 705, *Evaluation Guide*.

### **Appointment of Evaluator(s) and Preparation for Evaluation**

The Council chair appoints the evaluator(s) based upon a recommendation from the CEC chair and Council staff. The evaluator is selected from a pool of professionals who have expertise in continuing education. Individuals who are selected to represent the Council as evaluators will have participated in a training session for evaluators. Should an evaluation team be appointed, one

evaluator will serve as chair and be responsible for preparing and submitting the report of the evaluation.

The evaluators do not act as consultants to the provider. The evaluators' role is that of factfinder and observer to present their findings to the CEC related to the provider's potential noncompliance with the Council's standards and requirements.

At least 60 calendar days before the evaluation, Council staff formally informs the provider of the name of the evaluator(s) and the time, date, and location of the evaluation. The provider has the prerogative of rejecting an evaluator when an appropriate cause related to conflict of interest can be clearly identified. In such a case, a written statement from the provider is to be submitted to the Council office within 15 calendar days of receipt of the notice of evaluators. The Council will not appoint evaluators who have any known conflict of interest in the evaluation of the provider, including graduates, current and former faculty members, administrators, or officers of the provider.

On-site evaluation of an activity includes observation of a learning activity in session and review of facilities and resources. Evaluation of instructional media includes participation of the evaluator in the continuing education activity.

### **Reverse Site Evaluation**

The CEC and/or Council have the prerogative of scheduling a reverse site evaluation rather than an on-site or virtual evaluation of a provider. In a reverse site evaluation, someone of authority or director/administrator of the provider attends a CEC meeting virtually or in person at the discretion of the Council, at the provider's expense, to present information and appropriate documentation about the provider relative to specific concerns of the CEC and/or Council.

Once the CEC and Council have made a determination that a reverse site evaluation must occur, the provider will be informed of the specific concerns needing to be addressed. The provider is expected to address all concerns and provide any additional supporting documents related to the concerns on the day of the reverse site evaluation.

### **Virtual Site Evaluation**

A virtual site evaluation may include an evaluator's observation of a live activity as it occurs or the attendance of a virtual activity.

### **Preparation of the Report**

The evaluator prepares a draft report based on observations from the evaluation. The evaluator or team chair forwards this draft report to the Council staff for editing. The draft report is then returned to the evaluator for review and comment. A draft copy of the report, consisting of a summary of findings, areas of potential noncompliance, recommendations, and commendations is forwarded to the director of continuing education and the chief administrative officer of the provider.

The provider is given 30 calendar days to submit a substantive response to areas of potential noncompliance identified in the report, as well as any supporting documentation, prior to consideration of the report by the CEC. The cover letter to the provider specifies the deadline for Implementation Date July 1, 2025

receipt of the response. The provider may offer corrections of errors as they relate to names, positions, data, and other documentable facts in the report; however, findings based on the on-site visit will not be modified.

## **CONSIDERATION BY THE CEC AND THE COUNCIL**

### **CEC Review**

The CEC meets prior to each of the regular meetings of the Council and submits its approval action recommendations to the Council (see Categories of Approval and Approval Period).

Each approval recommendation from the CEC to the Council includes the approval status, date by which the next petition is due, identification of areas of noncompliance with Council standards and requirements, identification of areas that merit commendation, and a schedule for requesting progress reports. The recommendations from the CEC to the Council are confidential.

During discussions about the approval status of continuing education providers, CEC members affiliated with the provider under consideration in a governance, administrative, staff, or faculty capacity or in any other financial or personal capacity must recuse themselves from the deliberations. CEC members who served on the most recent evaluation of educational activities are required to recuse themselves from discussion and voting until the Council has determined a final approval action.

In reviewing a progress report, the CEC has the prerogative to add, modify, or delete areas of potential noncompliance or to recommend the Council add, modify, or delete areas of potential noncompliance.

### **Council Action**

At a meeting of the Council, the CEC chair presents the confidential recommendation(s) of the CEC. Areas of noncompliance determined by the Council may include, but are not limited to, those identified by an evaluation team and CEC. The provider will be required to submit documentation of progress made in addressing areas of noncompliance and/or concerns expressed by the CEC or Council.

The Council determines the provider's approval status.

Approval actions are taken by the Council at official meetings. Under special circumstances, e-ballots or video/conference calls may be used.

During discussions about the approval status of the provider, Council members affiliated with the provider under consideration in a governance, administrative, staff, or faculty capacity or in any other financial or personal capacity must recuse themselves from the deliberations. Council members who served on the most recent evaluation of educational activities are required to recuse themselves from discussion and voting until the final approval action has been determined.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The Council provides opportunity for individuals or organizations to submit written comments concerning a provider's qualifications for approval. The Council publishes notices on its website regarding its plans to review petitions for continued approval and/or conduct an evaluation of a provider. The notice indicates the deadline for receipt of public comments.

Public comments can be anonymous, must relate to the provider, and must be received no later than 60 days prior to the CEC's next meeting. Comments will be forwarded to the CEC and to the director of continuing education, if appropriate, for review, response, and appropriate action.

## **CATEGORIES OF APPROVAL AND APPROVAL PERIOD**

### **Provisional Approval**

Provisional approval indicates substantial compliance of a new provider with CPME 720, *Standards and Requirements for Approval of Continuing Education Providers in Podiatric Medicine*.

Provisional approval is effective on the date the action is taken by the Council. Provisional approval is not granted retroactively nor prior to the date on which the Council takes action.

As a condition of continued provisional approval, the provider also may be requested to provide one or more progress reports at specific intervals, as indicated in the approval letter. The progress report(s) is to demonstrate correction of specific areas of noncompliance in meeting one or more requirements and/or to any other concerns identified by the CEC and/or Council.

Provisional approval extends no longer than three years.

The provider's first petition for continued approval is due no later than three years from the time of the Council action. The approval letter includes the date by which the first scheduled petition is due.

A provider granted provisional approval may not extend joint providership.

### **Approval**

Approval indicates full compliance with the Council's standards and requirements for approval. In granting an extended period of approval, the Council expresses its confidence in the abilities of the provider to continue providing adequate support and implementing ongoing improvements in the continuing education program.

The provider is granted an initial term of approval effective at the time of the Council action. The approval letter includes the effective date of approval and the submission date of the next scheduled petition for continued approval. Subsequent petitions are due every five years. The CEC and/or Council may request additional information or submission of the petition at an earlier date should significant concerns become evident from review of the provider's annual report or progress report(s).

Approval of a provider does not imply approval of the provider's auxiliary organizations or

divisions, such as regional or local chapters of a national organization.

### **Approval with Report**

Approval with report indicates a provider is in substantial compliance with CPME 720, *Standards and Requirements for Approval of Continuing Education Providers in Podiatric Medicine*; however, one or more areas of noncompliance have been identified.

The progress report(s) must demonstrate correction of specific areas of noncompliance in identified by the CEC and/or Council and must be submitted by the date specified in the approval letter. Failure to meet the standards and requirements as stated by the Council may result in probation.

The approval letter includes the date the next petition is due. Petitions are due every five years. The CEC and/or Council may request additional information or submission of the petition at an earlier date should significant concerns become evident from review of the provider's annual report or progress report(s).

The CEC may request that the provider submit additional progress reports to allow for further monitoring of issues of concern and/or to answer questions arising from review of the progress report. Failure to meet the requirements as stated by the Council may result in probation.

### **Probation**

Probation is an approval category that indicates a provider has not demonstrated compliance with CPME 720, *Standards and Requirements for Approval of Continuing Education Providers in Podiatric Medicine*, to the extent that the quality and effectiveness of the continuing education program are in jeopardy. This category serves as a strong warning to the provider that serious problems exist that could cause its educational program to fail. The provider is considered to be a candidate for withdrawal of approval when placed on probation.

Providers on probation may not enter into any type of joint providership agreements. Providers on probation may fulfill previously executed joint providership agreements. The provider on probation is required to submit to the CEC and Council all executed joint provider agreements.

The provider must demonstrate significant progress in the correction of areas of noncompliance within a specified period, as determined by the CEC and/or Council. The Council may then grant a change in approval status.

The extent to which the provider is in compliance with the area(s) of noncompliance will be based on a review of one or more progress. The Council may elect to extend the two-year period for the following good causes:

- Change in director of continuing education
- Change in administrator of continuing education
- Demonstration of progress on a plan whose fulfillment would require an extension in time

The period of probation is determined by the Council but is usually limited to a maximum of two years. Failure to meet the Council's standards and requirements during the two-year period, including any extension for good cause, will result in withdrawal of approval.

A decision to place the provider on probation is not subject to the Council's procedures for reconsideration or appeal.

### **Withholding of Provisional Approval**

Withholding of provisional approval occurs when the application from a new provider fails to demonstrate substantial compliance with CPME 720, *Standards and Requirements for Approval of Continuing Education Providers in Podiatric Medicine*. When the Council proposes withholding provisional approval of a provider, factors that have a significant impact on the effectiveness of the provider are identified as the basis for the action. A decision to withhold approval will not become final or be published until the processes of procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, and appeals are exhausted (see Procedural Reconsideration, Reconsideration, and Appeal).

### **Withdrawal of Approval**

Withdrawal of approval is determined under any one of the following conditions:

- A provider on probation has failed to correct one or more areas of noncompliance, or a new area(s) of noncompliance has emerged, and therefore the provider fails to demonstrate substantial noncompliance with CPME 720, *Standards and Requirements for Approval of Continuing Education Providers in Podiatric Medicine*.
- A provider voluntarily withdraws from offering continuing education activities. Actions to withdraw approval voluntarily are not subject to the Council's procedures for procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, and appeal.
- A provider has remained inactive by not conducting an educational activity for three consecutive years immediately following completion of the last educational activity (see Inactive Status).

A decision to withdraw approval will not become final or be published until the processes of procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, and appeal are exhausted. Reconsideration and appeal are available only to providers on probation failing to correct areas of noncompliance (see Procedural Reconsideration, Reconsideration, and Appeal).

## **NOTIFICATION OF ACTION**

Following action by the Council, an approval letter indicating the Council action is forwarded to each provider currently under consideration. Confidential correspondence regarding Council actions is addressed to the director of continuing education and the chief administrative officer.

When the Council acts either to place the provider on probation, continue probation, withhold approval, or withdraw approval, the letter is sent by email and certified mail, with a return receipt requested to the director of continuing education and the chief administrative officer. within 30 calendar days of the Council action.

The notification letter indicates the approval category of the provider. Letters to providers that have been granted provisional approval, approval, approval with report, and probation will include the due date of the next petition. When the CEC and Council require submission of a progress report, the letter identifies the reason(s) for taking the action, the required supplementary documentation, and the due date.

When the action is to withhold provisional approval or withdraw approval, letters to providers will specify the reason for the action, the date of the action, the processes for procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, and appeal, and the date by which such a request must be received by the Council.

The Council awards a certificate to providers recognized in the categories of provisional approval, approval, and approval with report.

## **PROCEDURAL RECONSIDERATION, RECONSIDERATION, AND APPEAL**

The following reconsideration and appeal procedures are available if the Council proposes withholding or withdrawing approval:

- **Procedural reconsideration, followed by reconsideration, followed by appeal, or**
- **Reconsideration, followed by appeal**

A request to initiate the processes of procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, or appeal will be accepted for cause. A request will not be accepted based on dissatisfaction with the proposed adverse action nor will it be accepted for modifications made subsequent to the determination of the adverse action.

The letter of the adverse action shall include the basis for the adverse action, and the provider's right to request procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, and appeal are stated clearly in the notification letter.

When the Council considers an adverse action, (resulting in withholding of provisional approval or withdrawal of approval), the action does not become final, nor is it published, until the provider has been afforded an opportunity to complete the processes related to procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, and/or appeal. If the provider does not initiate the procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, or appeal processes, then the provider's rights to due process through the Council are exhausted.

During this due process period, the approval status of the provider reverts to the status prior to the adverse action. If the Council sustains an action to withdraw approval, the final action becomes effective as determined by the Council but will not be fewer than 60 calendar days and not more than one year following the date of the initial adverse action of the Council.

### **Procedural Reconsideration**

Procedural reconsideration is the process allowing the provider opportunity to request that the Council review the proposed adverse action for the purpose of determining whether the Council or CEC failed to follow Council procedures described in this publication. Because procedural

reconsideration is designed for the review of errors in the application of Council procedures, matters of disagreement related to issues of substance will not be reviewed within the procedural reconsideration process. Such matters, however, may be identified as the basis for a request for reconsideration and/or appeal.

A request for procedural reconsideration must be submitted within 30 calendar days following receipt of the letter. If such a request is not submitted and postmarked or date-stamped within this 30-day period, then the Council considers the provider to have waived all rights to procedural reconsideration. The provider must submit its written request to the Council office by email and certified mail, with a return receipt requested.

The request for procedural reconsideration must identify the procedure(s) in question and describe in detail the provider's claim that the procedure(s) was not followed, including any documentary evidence to support the claim. Following review by Council staff, the request for procedural reconsideration is considered by the Council's Executive Committee by virtual meeting/conference call or meeting. The Council acknowledges in writing the receipt of all procedural reconsideration materials.

Based on a recommendation of the Executive Committee, a decision may be made by the Council either by virtual meeting/conference call or meeting to:

- sustain the previous action.
- rescind the previous action and refer the matter for additional review by the CEC; or
- defer action and conduct an on-site evaluation.

The director of continuing education and the chief administrative officer are notified of the action taken with respect to the procedural reconsideration no later than 30 calendar days following the next scheduled meeting of the Council following the original determination of the action that led to the request for procedural reconsideration.

## **Reconsideration**

Reconsideration is the process allowing the provider the opportunity to request that the CEC and/or Council review the proposed adverse action for the purpose of determining whether any error or omission occurred in making the decision.

A written request for reconsideration must be received by the Council within 30 calendar days following receipt of the notification letter. If a request for reconsideration is not received within this 30-day period, the Council considers the provider to have waived all rights to reconsideration and subsequent appeal. The provider must submit its written request to the Council by email and certified mail, with a return receipt requested.

The request must include specific facts and reasons for which the provider contends the adverse action should not be taken. Council staff acknowledges in writing the receipt of all reconsideration materials. Following receipt by Council staff, the materials are considered by the CEC and/or Council by virtual meeting/conference call or at its next scheduled meeting. Reconsideration related to withholding of approval or withdrawal of approval must be considered by the CEC and/or Council at its next meeting.

Reconsideration of the adverse action is completed no later than the next scheduled CEC meeting following the original determination. The director of continuing education and the chief administrative officer are notified of the CEC and/or Council action.

Based on a recommendation of CEC, a decision to sustain or rescind a proposed action to withhold or withdraw approval is considered by the Council as determined by the Council. A recommendation may be made by the CEC and/or Council to assess the request for reconsideration by conducting an on-site evaluation of the provider. When an on-site evaluation is conducted, action is deferred as determined by the Council. If an evaluation is conducted during reconsideration, the provider and the Council share the cost of the evaluation equally. The director of continuing education and the chief administrative officer are notified of the Council's action.

During the reconsideration process, a representative(s) of the provider under reconsideration may request in writing the opportunity to submit a statement to the CEC and/or Council regarding the proposed adverse action. Any additional information that is to be brought to the attention of the CEC and/or Council must be submitted to the Council office 60 calendar days prior to the next meeting.

### **Appeal**

Following completion of the procedural reconsideration and/or reconsideration processes, the provider may appeal the decision to the Ad Hoc Committee for Appeals. The appeal process followed by the Council is articulated in CPME 935b, *Guidelines for the Conduct of Appeals by Residencies, Fellowships, Providers of Continuing Education, and Specialty Boards*. The provider may pursue a substantive and/or procedural claim.

## **REAPPLICATION FOLLOWING WITHHOLDING OR WITHDRAWAL OF APPROVAL**

A provider seeking approval that has had provisional approval withheld or approval withdrawn is expected to follow the procedures outlined for new providers (see Application for Approval of a New Continuing Education Provider).

## **JOINT PROVIDER**

A joint provider is an organization that is not a commercial interest and that chooses to collaborate with a provider having approval or approval with report status to conduct a continuing education activity providing continuing education contact hours (CECH). The joint provider agreement must clearly identify the provider.

Requirement 1.6 in CPME 720 outlines the requirements of an approved provider that elects to extend joint provider status to a non-approved organization. Activities provided in this manner **must** be reported as such in the provider's CPME 740, *Annual Report for Continuing Education Providers in Podiatric Medicine*. A provider not reporting these activities will be placed on probation at the next meeting of the Council (see Annual Report).

Providers with provisional approval or on probation may not act as the approved provider in joint provider agreements. Providers with probationary approval may fulfill previously executed joint

providership agreements. A provider on probation is required to submit to the CEC and Council all executed joint provider agreements.

The identified approved provider must be the entity issuing the document verifying attendance, not the joint provider.

## **INACTIVE STATUS**

Provisionally approved providers that fail to conduct an educational activity for three consecutive years immediately following the granting of provisional approval by the Council are placed on inactive status. Approved providers that fail to conduct an educational activity for three consecutive years immediately following completion of the last educational activity are placed on inactive status. The provider will be notified when it is placed on inactive status. If the provider does not conduct an educational activity the Council may withdraw approval.

All approved providers are required to submit an annual report and annual assessment fees, regardless of whether any educational programs are conducted.

Collaborating with a joint provider constitutes active status for a provider, including when the joint activity is the provider's sole activity during the year.

## **TERMINATION OF PROVIDER**

If an approved provider ceases operations, the Council will withdraw approval of the provider based on voluntary termination, effective on the date of closure of the provider or termination of the educational program. It is the responsibility of the director of continuing education and/or the chief administrative officer to notify the Council in writing if the provider terminates its educational program. The provider is responsible for notifying registrants for any upcoming activities of the voluntary termination of the program of continuing education; the provider must also implement its cancellation policy. The provider ceasing operations is responsible for maintaining records verifying completion of all prior educational activities including the number of CECH awarded each learner for a minimum of five years.

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

Completion of the annual report, CPME 740, *Annual Report for Continuing Education Providers in Podiatric Medicine*, is required of each approved provider beginning with the provider's first year of provisional approval. The annual report provides the Council with current information for CPME's database, and the list of approved providers maintained on the Council's website.

Council staff reviews annual reports with emphasis on determination of CECH and acceptable educational activity content and brings concerns to the attention of CEC and/or Council at its next scheduled meeting. Council staff may correspond with the director to request that the provider submit specific information for consideration at the CEC meeting.

The CEC and/or Council reserve(s) the right to request additional materials to clarify information in the annual report. Failure to submit a complete and accurate annual report may result in a change of

approval status by the Council.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE POLICIES**

All reports and communications regarding providers are confidential within the Council, CEC, Ad Hoc Committee for Appeals, evaluation teams, and Council staff. Council members, CEC members, consultants, evaluators, and staff sign a confidentiality statement on an annual basis, confirming privileged information will not be disclosed in any manner.

All proceedings of the CEC and Council with respect to determining approval recommendations and actions are held in executive session.

Because of the relationship of approval and licensure, the Council has the prerogative of providing confidential information regarding the approval status of providers to state boards for examination and licensure, upon the specific written requests of these organizations. Council staff, the CEC, and the Council will not release or confirm the following information in any form:

- The name or status of a provider initiating contact with the Council office concerning an application for approval
- The name or status of a provider applying for approval that has not yet been apprised of an approval decision
- The name or status of a provider that has applied for and been denied approval as a provider of continuing education
- The name or status of a provider having approval withheld or withdrawn (prior to exhaustion of the procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, and appeal processes)

All inquiries as to the approval status of a specific provider will be answered by referral to the list of approved providers on the Council's website or to the provider(s) in question.

The list of approved providers is on the Council's website and identifies approved providers and their approval status. Areas of noncompliance, as reflected by standard and requirement numbers, are included when the provider is placed on probation.

Withholding of approval and withdrawal of approval are published following exhaustion of the entire process of procedural reconsideration, reconsideration, and appeal. Voluntary termination is published following the Council action.

Providers are responsible for notifying the appropriate state boards for examination and licensure of final adverse actions.

## **REVIEW OF FORMAL COMPLAINTS**

The Council reviews only those complaints related to the alleged noncompliance of a provider with CPME 720, *Standards and Requirements for Approval of Continuing Education Providers in Podiatric Medicine*. The mechanism for reviewing formal complaints is specified in CPME 925b, *Complaint Procedures (Committees)*.

## **STATEMENT OF APPROVAL STATUS**

An approved provider must use the following statement in reference to its approval status in final activity materials/webpages, documentation of attendance, on-demand/instructional media, and other publications pertaining to the continuing education activity:

“(Name of provider) is approved by the Council on Podiatric Medical Education as a provider of continuing education in podiatric medicine. (Name of provider) has approved this activity for a maximum of \_\_\_ continuing education contact hours.”

Joint providers must use the following statement in reference to their approval status in the final activity materials/webpages, documentation of attendance, on-demand/instructional media, and other publications pertaining to the continuing education activity:

“This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the standards and requirements for approval of providers of continuing education in podiatric medicine through a joint provider agreement between (name of provider) and (name of non-approved provider). (Name of provider) is approved by the Council on Podiatric Medical Education as a provider of continuing education in podiatric medicine. (Name of provider) has approved this activity for a maximum of \_\_\_ continuing education contact hours.”

## **ASSESSMENT OF EVALUATOR EFFECTIVENESS**

The effectiveness of the on-site and virtual evaluation process is assessed formally by the provider and the evaluation team. The Executive Committee of the Council monitors the effectiveness of on-site evaluators by reviewing evaluation questionnaires completed by providers regarding the performance of on-site evaluators, as well as those completed by the team leaders and other team members. The Executive Committee forwards to the Council a report of its review, identifying areas requiring follow-up and evaluators who might require remediation or dismissal.

In reviewing evaluation team reports, the CEC may forward comments about individual evaluators to the Council’s Executive Committee. To assure objectivity in its approval recommendations, the CEC never provided the post-evaluation questionnaires completed by the sponsoring institution and evaluation team members.

The Council commends effective evaluators and provides remediation for ineffective evaluators. The CEC and/or Executive Committee may suggest to the Council that evaluators who demonstrate repeated ineffectiveness be removed from the list of evaluators for continuing education providers.

## **NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY**

The Council prohibits discrimination related to all of its activities on the basis of sex, creed, race, national origin, age, color, sexual orientation, gender identification, political belief, disability, or any other factor protected by law.

## **FEE POLICIES**

Fees have been established for providers seeking approval and the submission of petitions and  
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annual reports. Continuing education fees are outlined in CPME's Provider Fees document.

All costs related to evaluations of new and approved providers are borne by the provider. The Council requires pre-payment of a specified evaluation fee. Following the evaluation, the Council invoices the provider for the remainder of the full cost of the evaluation. In the event a reverse site visit is scheduled, the provider is responsible for all expenses associated with its representatives' attendance at a CEC meeting.

If an evaluation is conducted for the purpose of reconsideration, the provider and the Council share the cost of the evaluation equally. If the provider cancels or reschedules, any resulting penalties, fees, or increased costs are the responsibility of the provider.

Providers that have had approval withheld or approval withdrawn and that subsequently reapply must submit another application fee.

The Council has established an annual fee that is assessed to each approved provider. A late fee is assessed to all fees not paid by the date identified by the Council.

Providers requesting appeals of adverse actions are assessed a portion of the anticipated actual costs prior to the appeal. Providers are invoiced for the remainder of any additional actual costs after the appeal.

All fees are nonrefundable. The Council reserves the right to revise established fees.