

# **Continuing Education (CE) Requirements for Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, Dialysis Technicians, Community Health Workers and Medication Aides in Ohio**

## ***What is Continuing Education (CE)?***

CE means a learning activity that builds upon a prelicensure or precertification education program and enables a licensee or certificate holder to acquire or improve knowledge or skills that promote professional or technical development to enhance the licensee's or certificate holder's contribution to quality health care and pursuit of health care career goals.

A Category A contact hour is directly related to the Ohio Nurse Practice Act and the rules of the Ohio Board of Nursing. To qualify as Category A, the CE must be approved by an Ohio Board of Nursing (OBN) approver, or offered by an OBN approved provider unit headquartered in the state of Ohio.

## ***Initial CE Requirements***

Applicants applying for licensure by endorsement (from another state) are required to complete two (2) contact hours of Category A CE.

Applicants applying for a Volunteer Certificate are required to complete twenty-four (24) contact hours of CE. At least one (1) of the contact hours must be Category A.

## ***Renewal CE Requirements***

### Registered Nurse (RN) and Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)

The RN licensure period is from September 1 of odd numbered years through August 31 of the following odd numbered year. The LPN licensure period is from September 1 of even numbered years through August 31 of the following even numbered year. RNs and LPNs must complete twenty-four (24) contact hours of CE during each licensure period to renew a license. A nurse who has been licensed by endorsement for less than or equal to one (1) year must complete twelve (12) contact hours. For every renewal, at least one (1) of the contact hours must be Category A.

### Certificate of Authority (COA) - APRN

COA holders are required to maintain national certification.

### Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) - APRN

A CNS who is not certified by a national nursing certifying organization shall obtain twelve (12) additional contact hours in the nurse's area of practice or in relevant programs from other health care disciplines.

### Volunteer Certificate for an LPN, RN or APRN

A Volunteer Certificate holder must complete twenty-four (24) contact hours of CE during each certificate period. At least one (1) of the contact hours must be Category A.

### Certificate to Prescribe (CTP)

CTP holders must complete additional CE in advanced pharmacology. Twelve (12) contact hours are required if the CTP has been held for a full renewal period or six (6) contact hours if the CTP has been held for less than a full renewal period.

### Ohio Certified Dialysis Technician (OCDT)

An OCDT must complete fifteen (15) contact hours of CE to renew a certificate. At least ten (10) contact hours must be directly related to dialysis care, and one (1) contact hour must be Category A.

### Community Health Worker (CHW)

A certified CHW must complete fifteen (15) contact hours of CE to renew a certificate. At least one (1) contact hour must be directly related to establishing and maintaining professional boundaries, and one (1) contact hour must be Category A.

### Certified Medication Aide (MA-C)

A MA-C must complete fifteen (15) contact hours of CE to renew a certificate. At least ten (10) contact hours must be related to medications or medication administration consistent with the function of the MA-C, one (1) contact hour must be directly related to establishing and maintaining professional boundaries and one (1) contact hour must be Category A.

### ***What if I was recently licensed or certified in Ohio for the first time?***

A nurse (who received a first license by examination in Ohio), OCDT and CHW are not required to obtain CE for their first renewal. A MA-C is required to obtain CE for their first renewal.

### ***How does the Board know I met the CE requirement?***

Licensee and certificate holders are required to indicate whether they have met the CE requirement during the time of renewal (on the renewal application). Individuals are not required to send documentation of their contact hours with their renewal application.

Evidence of CE is required when reactivating or reinstating an inactive or lapsed license or certificate, or upon receipt of a "CE Audit" letter. In addition, when reactivating or reinstating a license or certificate, CE requirements may vary.

### ***What is an audit?***

The Board may conduct a random audit of any licensee or certificate holder to determine compliance with CE requirements. The time period for which you are being audited will be stated in the "CE Audit" letter. If audited, an individual will be asked to send photocopies of CE certificates or school transcripts to the Board.

### ***What is a "waiver"?***

A "waiver" is a one-time opportunity to opt out of the CE requirements for one (1) renewal period for RNs, LPNs, OCDTs and CHWs. A CTP holder and MA-Cs are not eligible for the waiver. Also, a non-certified CNS may not use a waiver to satisfy the requirement of the twelve (12) contact hours of CE. A waiver can be requested at the time of renewal (on the renewal application), and cannot be rescinded.

The waiver is not available for reactivating or reinstating an inactive or lapsed license or certificate. A waiver cannot be used after receiving an audit notice.

### ***How do I know if a particular educational activity is acceptable to the Board as recognized CE?***

Any of the following options may be used by a licensee or certificate holder to satisfy the CE requirements:

- A CE activity that has been approved by an OBN approver or provided by an approved provider unit.

An OBN approver is an approver of CE, headquartered in the state of Ohio. An OBN approver is authorized by the Board to approve CE activities offered by a provider or to approve a Provider Unit. Category A CE must be approved by an Ohio Board of Nursing (OBN) approver, or offered by an OBN approved provider unit headquartered in the state of Ohio.

An acceptable CE certificate will include a statement with one of the OBN approver's name and numbers listed below.

OBN Approvers are:

- Licensed Practical Nurse Association of Ohio (OBN-002-92)
  - Northwest State Community College, Division of Nursing (OBN-008-92)
  - Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (OBN-010-93)
  - Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OBN-003-92)
  - Ohio League for Nursing (OBN-006-92)
  - Ohio Nurses Association (OBN-001-91)
  - Omnicare Great Lakes Region, Division of Education (OBN-009-93)
  - UC Health (OBN-007-92)
  - University of Cincinnati, College of Nursing (OBN-011-93)
  - UVMC – Education and Development (OBN-005-92)
- A CE activity that has been approved by a board or agency regulating the licensee or certificate holder in another jurisdiction;
  - A CE activity that has been approved or provided by a nationally recognized accreditation system of CE (examples include the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), and the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET)), or a national certifying organization that meets the requirements in division (A) of section 4723.46 of the Revised Code;
  - A successfully completed course provided by an accredited educational institution for which academic credit is awarded

Academic credit received for successful completion of a course taken through an accredited educational institution may be used to meet the CE requirement. Academic credit translates into contact hours as follows:

- 1 credit hour in a quarter system = ten (10) contact hours
- 1 credit hour in a trimester system = twelve (12) contact hours
- 1 credit hour in a semester system = fifteen (15) contact hours

- An independent study - a self-paced learning activity for which contact hours may be awarded that includes both a mechanism for evaluation of learning and feedback to the learner;
- Interprofessional CE – a planned, organized learning experience designed for a target audience made up of members of two or more different professions;

- A CE activity that has been approved by a board or an agency that regulates a health care profession or related discipline in Ohio or another jurisdiction. Examples include the State Medical Board of Ohio, Ohio State Board of Pharmacy, State Board of Psychology and the Counselor, Social Worker and Marriage & Family Therapist Board.

The following activities DO NOT MEET the CE requirement in Ohio:

- repetition of any educational activity with identical content and course outcomes within a single reporting period;
- self-directed learning such as reading of texts or journal articles that have not been approved as an independent study or awarded contact hours by an accredited or approved provider or provider unit;
- participation in clinical practice or research that is not part of a CE activity;
- a personal development activity;
- professional meetings or conventions except for those portions designated as a CE activity;
- community service or volunteer practice;
- Board-ordered CE;
- membership in a professional nursing organization.

***Can I obtain my independent study CE by mail or on the Internet?***

Independent studies may be taken through mail order courses or the Internet. There is no limit to the number of contact hours obtained through independent study.

***What records should I keep and how long should I keep them?***

Documentation of completion of a CE activity should be supplied by the provider of that activity. If audited, you will be required to send photocopies of documents (i.e. certificate) that contain all of the following information:

- name;
- title of the program;
- date of program completion;
- name of the provider;
- number of contact hours;
- OBN Approver number or the name of the authorized approver or the name of the approval body.

For academic credit, a school transcript or grade report should include the licensee or certificate holder's name, the name of the school, the dates attended and credit hours awarded. The transcript can be unofficial. A licensee or certificate holder is responsible for keeping track of CE records. CE documents must be maintained for a period of 6 years.

**CONTACT THE BOARD**

For questions about CE requirements, please contact the CE Unit at [ce@nursing.ohio.gov](mailto:ce@nursing.ohio.gov). If you are an advanced practice registered nurse with CE questions, you may contact [aprn@nursing.ohio.gov](mailto:aprn@nursing.ohio.gov).