

**GUIDELINES FOR APPROVAL OF CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS  
FOR STATE, LOCAL AND REGIONAL  
HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATIONS**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The Commission on Certification for Health Informatics and Information Management Professionals (CCHIIM) promulgates the following guidelines which allow state, local and regional health information management associations to approve continuing education (CE) programs offered by their organizations and to assign the appropriate number of clock hour credits.

These guidelines have the following limitations:

- Only state, local and regional health information management associations affiliated with AHIMA are authorized to approve their continuing education programs (e.g., such as seminars, workshops, instructional materials developed by state associations and state meeting programs).
- Other organizations interested in AHIMA approval, must do so through the AHIMA's Prior Approval Program.

The AHIMA Certification Department staff is available for consultation when assistance with the guidelines is needed.

**2. DESIGNATING INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBLE FOR APPROVAL OF CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

The president or other appropriate officer of the state, local or regional health information management association should assign the responsibility for prior approval of educational programs to a specific committee and/or individual (e.g., Central Office Coordinator, Program Committee Chairperson, etc.) within the organization.

**3. DETERMINING PROGRAM CONTENT ELIGIBLE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDIT**

Program content eligible for continuing education credit consists of topics relevant to the field of health informatics and information management practice. Sessions which maintain, update, or enlarge knowledge and/or skills related to health informatics and information management practice are appropriate. This provides wide latitude in selecting program content. Program planners should design programs that address the needs of practicing health informatics and information management professionals. The overall program objective should always be to increase the competence and improve the performance of individuals currently practicing in the field.

In order to achieve this objective, planners should seek ways to address identified areas for development in health informatics and information management practice by looking at the following areas:

- ◇ Specialized or more advanced areas of practice
- ◇ Non-hospital health informatics and information management practice,
- ◇ New and evolving technology, principles and practices, or
- ◇ Entry level practice areas

Regardless of the level of practice targeted in educational programs, the **content must be relevant to the health informatics and information management field as presented in the HIIM Domains** to be eligible for continuing education credit. The HIIM Domains are the following:

- ◇ Technology
- ◇ Management Development
- ◇ Clinical Data Management
- ◇ Performance Improvement
- ◇ External Forces
- ◇ Clinical Foundations and
- ◇ Privacy and Security

Continuing education credit cannot be awarded for the following program components (time allotted to these activities must be **excluded** from the hours for which continuing education credit is awarded):

- ◇ registration time
- ◇ greetings or welcome
- ◇ breaks
- ◇ meals
- ◇ business meetings
- ◇ tours
- ◇ delegate's reports (either state or national meetings)
- ◇ state updates
- ◇ \*AHIMA update not presented by an AHIMA Board Member, an AHIMA staff member or a Commission member acting as an official representative of AHIMA
- ◇ functions not considered Health informatics and information management-related, e.g., travelogues, fashion, personal financial planning, etc.

*\*The AHIMA update, when **included** within one (1) or more hours of educational programming, **AND** when delivered by an AHIMA Board Member, an AHIMA staff member, or a Commission member acting as an official representative of AHIMA, is eligible for inclusion within the total hours allocated to the educational programming, for the purposes of determining the number of Continuing Education (CE) units.*

Note: Vendor exhibits are allotted only 1 hour of CE credit, regardless of the amount of time given for Vendor exhibits at a meeting.

It is suggested that objectives of the program be identified and advertised. It is also suggested that the qualifications of speakers be reviewed to assure they are appropriate to the topic presented.

#### **4. CALCULATING CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS**

Continuing education units are based on educational contact hours. Sixty minutes of attendance at an educational program equals one (1) CEU. The rounding criterion is 45 minutes.

a. Educational sessions should be tallied for the day. Exclude any ineligible portions listed in Section 3. Whenever the total is not a whole number, adjust the total hours by rounding.

- Example 1: A one-day program which calculates to 5.5 hours when all ineligible portions have been deducted is equal to five continuing education units.
- Example 2: A five hour and 45 minute program is eligible for six continuing education units.

b. Do not round individual sessions. Continuing education hours are calculated separately for each day of multi-day programs such as annual meetings or extensive workshops.

- Example: A two-day program which calculated to 5.5 hours on the first day and 6.5 hours on the second day is eligible for 11 (not 12) continuing education units.

c. Continuing education units are awarded for the number of contact hours actually attended.

- Example: An individual who attends three hours of a four hour program is eligible for only three continuing education units.

## 5. CORE EDUCATIONAL CONTENT AREAS

The CCHIIM has a mandatory program for maintenance of certification. In order to retain AHIMA credentials, professionals are required to participate in its recertification program. Attendance at seminars and/or workshops is one method of obtaining continuing education credit and fulfilling credential maintenance requirements.

Please refer to the HIIM Domains for examples of acceptable content areas .

## 6. ADVERTISING APPROVED STATUS

When the responsible individual has checked and approved the program content for relevance and the agenda for correct assignment of hours, the program should be advertised as follows:

**THIS PROGRAM HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR (number of CEUs) CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS FOR USE IN FULFILLING THE CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS OF THE AMERICAN HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (AHIMA).**

**Granting Prior Approval from AHIMA does not constitute endorsement of the program content or its Program Sponsor.**

## 7. VERIFYING ATTENDANCE

Certificates of completion must be provided to participants for recording and retention purposes. The following items must be included:

The certificate or verification statement should include the name of the attendee, the title of the program conducted, the date of the program, the number of hours approved, and the signature of the program chairperson. The certificate should not list AHIMA as the education provider. The appropriate text on certificates should read as follows,

**“This program has been approved by AHIMA for X hours of CEUs.”**

## **8. MAINTAINING RECORDS OF APPROVED ACTIVITIES**

It is recommended that the association maintains a Program Agenda and associated hours verifying the Continuing Education approved activities. At a minimum, this can be a copy of the verification that the program meets CCHIIM Guidelines. This should be retained in the association’s files for at least five (5) years. Larger states with multiple activities may wish to assign prior approval numbers to each educational program. These records are for state, local, or regional association files; documentation should not be forwarded to the CCHIIM.

For additional information or assistance contact:

CCHIIM  
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