

Dear Colleague:

In 2016, the General Assembly passed law that authorizes the Board of Medicine to require 2 hours of continuing education on controlled substances each biennium. The Board is to notify licensees prior to January 1st of each odd-numbered year that they are required to obtain the 2 hours in the next biennium.

For the first biennium, 2017-2018, all Board of Medicine licensees with prescriptive authority were required to obtain any 2 hours of continuing education related to pain management, the responsible prescribing of controlled substances, and the diagnosis and management of addiction.

Some physicians asked the Board to develop a 2-hour course for their convenience. What the Board did in early 2017, in concert with the Medical Society of Virginia, was to post on the Board's website a list of free, online courses developed by professional societies, universities, and government agencies.

Since the opioid regulations became effective in March 2017, the Board has recognized 2 significant issues. The first is that not all practitioners with prescriptive authority have read the regulations and understand them. The second is that some practitioners, having made the decision to reduce a patient's opioid, do not always taper in an effective way. So in response to these 2 issues, the Board endorses a 2-hour "package" of continuing education for its prescribing licensees. These 2 hours qualify as Type 1 continuing education for the purpose of renewal.

The 2 hours can be met by:

- Reading the Board of Medicine Regulations Governing Prescribing Opioids and Buprenorphine https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/medicine/leg/Medicine_Opioid_Regs_08082_018.doc
- Reading the Board's Frequently Asked Questions on Opioids and Buprenorphine <https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/medicine/docs/FAQPrescribingBuprenorphine.pdf>
- Viewing the Prescription Monitoring Program 7-minute video on NarxCare <https://app.brainshark.com/appriss/NarxCareNavigation?nodesktopflash=1>
- Taking the Stanford University course on "How to Taper Patients Off of Chronic Opioid Therapy" (1.25 hours CAT I) <https://stanford.cloud-cme.com/default.aspx?P=8&EID=20909>

This "package" will be on the Board of Medicine website at <https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/medicine/> under Controlled Substances CE Requirements.

Or if you so choose, you may obtain any other 2 hours as long as they relate to pain management, the responsible prescribing of controlled substances, and the diagnosis and management of addiction.

I hope this is helpful to you for 2019-2020.

With kindest regards,

William L. Harp, MD
Executive Director
Virginia Board of Medicine