

**Virginia Board of Medicine Guidance Document 85-16
Excerpt from Board Briefs 59, Winter 1999**

**Questions and Answers on Continuing Competency Requirements
for the Virginia Board of Medicine**

1. When must I have the required number of continuing competency hours completed in order to renew my license?

With the renewal of licensure in 2002. You will be required to sign a certification on your renewal form in 2002 that you have met the continuing competency requirements. Falsification on the renewal form is a violation of law and may subject you to disciplinary action.

2. Am I required to send in evidence of my continuing competency hours at the time I renew?

No. The Board will randomly select licensees for a post-renewal audit. If selected, you would be notified by mail that documentation is required and given a time frame within which to comply.

3. When do the continuing competency requirements begin?

Regulations become effective on December 8, 1999. Hours must be obtained within the two years immediately preceding renewal in 2002. You may not count any hours obtained prior to January 1, 2000 nor may you carry over excess hours to the following biennium.

4. Who maintains the required documents for verification of continuing competency? Hours?

It is the practitioner's responsibility to maintain the certificates and any other continuing competency forms or records for six years following renewal in 2002 and thereafter. Do not send any forms or documents to the Board of Medicine unless requested to do so.

5. What are "Type 1" hours?

Type 1 hours (at least 30 each biennium) are those that can be documented by an accredited sponsor or organization sanctioned by the profession. If the sponsoring organization does not award a participant with a dated certificate indicating the activity or course taken and the number of hours earned, the practitioner is responsible for obtaining a letter on organizational letterhead verifying the hours and activity. All 60 continuing competency hours each biennium may be Type 1 hours.

6. What are "face-to-face" hours?

The Board requires that 15 of the Type 1 hours must be earned in a face-to-face activity or course or one in which you actually interact with your peers. An interactive course sponsored by an accredited organization or school would be acceptable, but a televised or computerized video course in which there is no interaction by participants would not be acceptable for the face-to-face hours.

7. What are "Type 2" hours?

Type 2 hours (no more than 30 each biennium) are those earned in self-study, attending professionally related meetings, research and writing for a journal, learning a new procedure, sitting with the hospital ethics panel, etc. They are activities chosen by the practitioner based on assessment of his/her practice. They do not have to be sponsored by an accrediting organization, but must be recorded by the practitioner on the form provided by the Board.

8. Where do I obtain the instructions and forms for continuing competency requirements?

Forms and instructions are included in the January 2000 newsletter from the Board of Medicine. You should retain a copy to begin recording your hours, or you may download them from the Board's Internet website - www.dhp.state.va.us/levelone/med.htm. Records may be maintained electronically, but copies of documentation and forms will be necessary if a practitioner is audited following a renewal cycle. Forms may also be copied.

9. Is it possible for a practitioner to earn accredited hours that are sanctioned by the profession but are outside the specialty area in which he/she practices?

Yes. For example, a pediatrician or a surgeon could receive credit for documented hours sponsored by the American Academy of Family Practice.

10. What if I have earned the AMA Physician Recognition Award or have been recertified by my specialty board? Would that count for my continuing competency hours?

Yes. Provided the Board has documented proof that the requirements to obtain the AMA award (or other similar awards) or specialty board certification are equal to or exceed those required for renewal of licensure. It would only be necessary to submit evidence of having such an award or certification.

11. What if I am newly licensed during the 2000-2002 biennium? Do I still have to obtain the full 60 hours of continued competency?

No. There is an exemption for those persons and for anyone practicing solely without pay in a practice (free clinic, rescue squad, etc.) that is under the direction of a fully licensed physician.

12. What if I become ill or incapacitated and unable to complete my continuing competency requirements prior to renewal?

Upon written request from the practitioner explaining the circumstances, the Board may grant an extension or exemption for all or part of the required hours.

13. What if I am now retired and don't want to obtain continuing competency hours but don't want to give up my license?

You may request an inactive license from the Board, beginning with your next renewal. It is important to note that **holding an inactive license does not authorize anyone to engage in the practice of medicine, osteopathy, podiatry or chiropractic in Virginia.** If you intend

to practice at all in Virginia, even on a part-time or non-compensatory basis, you must retain your active license.

14. What happens if I take inactive licensure status and later decide to reactivate?

A practitioner seeking to reactivate a license must pay the active renewal fee and obtain the number of hours which would have be required for the years in which the license was inactive (not to exceed four years). If the practitioner has not been engaged in active practice for more than four years, he/she must pass a special purpose examination in his area of licensure.