

PLANNING CONTINUING EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

The purpose of the sponsorship process is to enhance the quality of continuing education by encouraging the adherence to the adult learning principles embodied in the "Essentials" or "Criteria" of the national accrediting organizations.

The time to contact the IHS Clinical Support Center to inquire about sponsorship and continuing education credits is when you conceive of or **start** to plan an activity, not after all of the details have been worked out. We have no intention of controlling the planning of your activity; we simply need to be involved in the process and want to have the opportunity to offer assistance when we feel we can help. Coordinators who have worked with us in this process have found that we can make their job easier and their CE product a better one.

One of the first steps in the planning process is to determine the target audience for your activity, and some broad, overall goals that you wish to accomplish. Once you have determined these, you should select a "Planning Committee," which must have one representative of each profession for which you plan to offer CE credit.

In order to begin the process of establishing a sponsorship agreement with the Clinical Support Center, Office of Continuing Education you will need to complete the appropriate **Proposal Form**. Proposal forms include: one for a single, one-hour activity or longer course, and one for an ongoing regularly scheduled series (RSS) of one-hour presentations. The other materials in the CE manual describe the steps involved in the completion of the planning process. The time to contact us is before the remainder of the documents and tasks are completed. This early communication with the Clinical Support Center will ensure that everything is accomplished in a mutually satisfactory manner.

We have avoided absolute deadlines for the submission of this "Proposal for a CE Activity" for several reasons; however, we encourage you to contact us at least 30 days prior to your CE event. We want to be as flexible as possible. To some extent, the "deadline" is a function of the complexity of the activity: it would be much longer for a complex, four-day course than for a one-hour lecture.

Although the CE planning steps are occasionally looked at as "requirements" (or obstacles), they are really useful tools to improve the learning experience. For this reason, we never ask you, as a CE coordinator, to do something "because it is required." Rather, we try to show you how, if you use these tools to your advantage, you can produce a better product for those who participate.

THE CONTINUING EDUCATION PROCESS

The remainder of this packet is intended to guide you through the steps involved in the CE planning process and to create a record of what took place. The steps include:

1. Establishing the target audience and broad, overall goals for the activity.
2. Determining the learning needs of the target audience.
3. Prioritizing needs and writing the agenda.
4. Writing behavioral learning objectives.
5. Choosing the teaching methods.
6. Creating and distributing promotional materials.
7. Identifying faculty and communicating with them.
8. Obtaining "Disclosures of Commercial Support."
9. Developing an evaluation plan.
10. Developing methods for documenting attendance.
11. Evaluating the activity after its completion.

Following the submission of your **Proposal** form, we will contact you as soon as we have reviewed it. If time is short, please give us a call so we can expedite the process. Upon acceptance of your proposal, we are committed to guiding you through this process. Again, regular consultation with the CSC staff throughout the planning process will ensure that all elements are addressed properly.

EDUCATIONAL DESIGN

After establishing the target audience and broad, overall goals for the activity have been identified, it is important to consider the questions, "What are the best ways to achieve these goals and course objectives?" and "What is the best format for this learning experience?" While live lectures are the most commonly used teaching method, often other methods can be more effective. Think about using one or more of the following:

- _____ Small, interactive workshops
- _____ Case presentations
- _____ Panel discussions
- _____ Hands-on practice
- _____ Demonstration
- _____ Questions and answers

A committee can spread the workload and improve the systematic planning process. It must include one representative of each profession in the target audience, to assure all professional perspectives are considered. The committee should keep minutes that show how it designed the educational experience:

- What methods did it use to find out what the target audience needed?
- How did it prioritize the needs and choose among them to select the topics to be included in the agenda?
- How were the objectives written?
- How were the faculty selected?
- How was it decided which learning formats to use?
- How were all subsequent tasks accomplished?

Faculty selection should be based not only on expertise in the subject, ability to teach, and familiarity with health care in Indian health programs, but also on enthusiasm. Those chosen to teach should know who will be in the audience (professions, experience, background), and what the learning objectives are for their presentation.

In summary, the following items should be considered when designing your educational activity:

- _____ The planning committee includes someone from each profession for whom the activity is intended.
- _____ Records are kept of the committee's discussions and decisions.
- _____ A variety of learning methods have been/will be considered in designing the activity.
- _____ Faculty have been/will be selected based on expertise, teaching ability, and familiarity with Indian health programs.
- _____ A faculty letter has been/will be sent to each presenter with the key information they will need to prepare.
- _____ Adequate time and meeting facilities have been/will be devoted to the learning activity.