



# CMA-sponsored CME bill becomes law

October 08, 2021

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Governor Gavin Newsom signed the California Medical Association (CMA) sponsored legislation **Assembly Bill (AB) 359 (Cooper)** into law on October 7, 2021. The bill expands the definition of continuing medical education (CME) qualifying content to include practice management education, which aligns with other state and national guidelines and results in better services to patients. The changes made by AB 359 went into effect upon the Governor's signature because the bill had an urgency clause.

The Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the American Medical Association (AMA) and California's Business and Professions Code 2190.1 define CME as consisting of "educational activities which serve to maintain, develop, or increase the knowledge, skills, and professional performance and relationships that a physician uses to provide services for patients, the public, or the profession."



ACCME and other states allow the definition for CME activities to include practice management content as these topics assist physicians in carrying out their professional responsibilities more effectively and efficiently.

Previous California law prohibited CME from including educational activities that include medical office management, billing and coding, etc. AB 359 specifically adds educational activities that “promote recommendations, treatments or manners of practicing medicine,” such as the following, as acceptable CME content\*:

- Practice management content designed to provide better service to patients, including, but not limited to, the use of technology or clinical office workflow
- Management content designed to support managing a health care facility, including, but not limited to, coding or reimbursement in a medical practice

As such, topics that would qualify for CME include:

- Clinical workflows to improve patient practices
- Use of technology including telehealth to increase access to care for underserved communities
- Coding and reimbursement in a medical practice to increase awareness of new health management tools (i.e., ACEs screenings, etc.)
- Practice management and clinical staff management (i.e., learning to use software to manage patient flow and communicate with staff, learning best practices for clinic staffing, dealing with patient/staff issues)
- Management and leadership, for physicians responsible for managing a health care facility

If you have any questions about the changes made by AB 359 or CME in general, please email [cme@cmadocs.org](mailto:cme@cmadocs.org) .

*\*These courses shall not together comprise more than 30% of the total hours of continuing medical education completed by a licensee to satisfy the continuing educational requirement established by the board.*

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