Unapproved Changes to Symposia Spark Revision of CPA Policy

Changes to some presentation materials, distribution of unapproved handouts, and inadequate interaction time between faculty and presenters were among concerns identified by onsite anonymous physician monitors of co-sponsored symposia presented at the last CPA annual meeting.

These physician monitors continue to play a crucial role in ensuring and advancing the quality of programming that is accredited and co-sponsored by the CPA with industry sponsorship. The monitors evaluate the content of what is presented against original submission materials, as well as how it is presented to ensure the presentations follow guidelines of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program.

“The onsite monitor policy is part of the CPA’s commitment to ensuring a high level of CPD programming. We want to ensure that the integrity of the process is upheld,” said Alex Saunders, the CPA’s Chief Executive Officer.

Last year, a record-breaking 11 co-sponsored and accredited symposia were presented at the 52nd Annual Meeting, which was held from October 31 to November 2, 2002 in Banff, Alberta, providing many opportunities to earn Section 1 MOC credits participants.

As an MOC accredited provider, the CPA must ensure the events it approves for Section 1 credits adhere to the principles defined by the RCPSC. To this end, the continuing professional development committee of the CPA developed and implemented one of the more rigorous review and approval process for co-sponsored events among the national specialty societies. “We take the term ‘co-sponsorship’ seriously, and as such the CPA is one of very few organizations that requires a review of program slides and other material before presentation,” said Mr. Saunders. This level of scrutiny has been criticized by some as being too rigorous, but the Standing Committee on Continuing Professional Development has deemed it essential given the position of the RCPSC and our strong desire to retain accredited provider status. The Committee also believes that it ensures the highest quality of learning experiences for CPA members, while also maintaining the credibility of the CPA.

The CPA’s implementation of MOC accreditation standards from the RCPSC requires a CPA-appointed Active Member be on the planning committee to represent the interests of the professional body in ensuring all criteria are met. Educational program materials are subject to expert peer review to confirm the relevancy, currency, scientific validity and balance is reflected in the presentation, following which the entire program is sent to a trained MOC physician assessor for final approval.

Despite the layers of scrutiny in its review process, the CPA faced new challenges in Banff arising from unapproved alterations to the content or design of some symposia, and distribution onsite of unreviewed materials, leading to concerns of imbalance and the potential for undue bias in some co-sponsored events, later requiring a written disclaimer letter from be sent to all Annual Meeting registrants from the Association.

In response to this, the CPA has tightened its policy review even further to now include scrutiny of materials being brought onsite for distribution in delegate kits and has advised industry partners that co-sponsors not following CPA accreditation guidelines to the letter may now also be reported in the Bulletin, and where indicated, accreditation may be withdrawn for an event.

The RCPSC launched the MOC program in January 2000. All Fellows of the College must participate in the program and earn a minimum of 400 credits in each five-year cycle. Those who choose not to participate in the program while maintaining certification, will not be listed in the RCPSC’s public register of Fellows and not permitted to continue to use fellowship designation. KH
An Attempted Murder Mystery

The latest addition to the CPA Annual Meeting’s innovative learning formats is a murder mystery. This game based format can be used as an accredited learning activity on its own (four MOC credits) or be built upon with two further sessions at the annual meeting and personal learning projects at home.

Games for learning have become more popular in the past 10 years. Dr. Ivan Silver has previously led workshops at the CPA Annual Meeting on using games in medical education, but this year’s murder mystery will be the most complex and comprehensive yet.

The murder mystery, to be held on the afternoon of Saturday, Nov. 1, has been devised to review potentially lethal complications of psychotropic medications nested within a complex story of research intrigue where suicide and homicide are also possibilities. Additional learning objectives related to physician health and research ethics form part of the game.

The game’s authors include two University of Toronto postgraduate trainees – Andrea Waddell, a psychiatry resident, and Aviv Gladman, an internal medicine resident. Dr. Waddell and Dr. Gladman are working in collaboration with Dr. Ivan Silver and Dr. Susan Abbey to deliver a top-flight learning experience.

Individuals come together in small teams to pool their knowledge, pursue missing knowledge and have a good time. Sunday morning you can attend workshops for a more didactic review of the content covered in the game and to learn how to devise games to be used in a variety of different educational settings.

We Want Your Feedback

We want your feedback as to what would you like to see in the CPD section of the CPA Bulletin. What do you want to read about? Possible topics include practical CPD information you can apply to designing your own learning experiences, stories about what others are doing for CPD, more theoretical information about adult learning, or designing CPD programs. Ivan Silver did a masterful job of educating us all about CPD, but now that we are “on board” what do people want to read about? We want to make this section useful to you in your everyday practice, so please help us out by sending your comments and concerns to the attention of Dr. Susan Abbey, CPD editor (e-mail: bulletin@cpa-apc.org or forward written requests to the CPA head office at 260 - 441 MacLaren Street, Ottawa, ON K2P 2H3).

Nous voulons vos commentaires

Nous aimerions obtenir vos commentaires au sujet de ce que vous aimeriez voir dans la section PPC du Bulletin de l’APC. Qu’est-ce que vous aimeriez lire? Les sujets possibles comprennent des renseignements pratiques de PPC que vous pouvez appliquer à créer vos propres expériences de formation, des histoires sur ce que font les autres pour le PPC, de l’information plus théorique sur l’apprentissage des adultes ou la création de programmes de PPC. Ivan Silver a accompli un travail de maître en nous enseignant à tous le PPC, mais maintenant que nous sommes « aux commandes », que veulent lire les gens? On veut que cette section soit utile à tous dans la pratique de tous les jours, alors veuillez nous aider en nous envoyant vos commentaires et préoccupations à l’attention de la Dre Susan Abbey, rédactrice de la section PPC (courriel: bulletin@cpa-apc.org, ou envoyez vos demandes écrites au siège social de l’APC, au 260-441 rue MacLaren, Ottawa ON K2P 2H3).

Une tentative de meurtre et mystère

Le dernier ajout aux formules d’apprentissage innovatrices de l’assemblée annuelle de l’APC est un jeu de meurtre et mystère. Cette formule basée sur le jeu peut être utilisée comme activité de formation agréée par elle-même (quatre crédits de MDC) ou peut s’ajouter à deux autres séances de l’assemblée annuelle et aux projets de formation personnelle à domicile.

Les jeux d’apprentissage ont gagné de la popularité au cours des 10 dernières années. Le Dr Ivan Silver a déjà animé des ateliers à l’assemblée annuelle de l’APC en se servant de jeux de formation médicale, mais cette année, le meurtre et mystère sera le jeu le plus complexe et le plus détaillé à ce jour.

Le meurtre et mystère, qui se déroulera l’après-midi du samedi 1er novembre, a été conçu pour étudier les complications éventuellement fatales des psychotropes, dans le cadre d’une histoire complexe d’intrigue de recherche où suicide et homicide sont aussi des possibilités. Des objectifs d’apprentissage additionnels liés à la santé des médecins et à la déontologie de la recherche font partie du jeu.


Les gens se réunissent en petites équipes pour mettre en commun leurs connaissances, trouver celles qui manquent et avoir du plaisir. Dimanche matin, vous pourrez assister aux ateliers pour une étude plus didactique du contenu du jeu, et pour apprendre comment concevoir des jeux qui peuvent servir dans différents cadres de formation.