

# Anesthesiology's New Continuing Medical Education Program

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For many years, people have asked me "Why doesn't the Journal offer continuing medical education (CME) credit?" However, on further inquiry, there did not appear to be broad interest, and the question of journal-based CME was allowed to drift. With coming changes in the requirements that will need to be met to obtain CME credit, the American Society of Anesthesiologists began to explore various new ways to help its members with their professional education needs, and the idea of journal-based CME quickly reappeared. A critical step in this process was Dr. Peter Bailey's agreement to take on the task of managing this process. And so, beginning with this issue of the Journal, readers will be able to obtain up to 1 h of Category 1 CME credit each month and, we hope, will also be encouraged to spend a bit more time reading ANESTHESIOLOGY.

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*Editor-in-Chief*

This issue of ANESTHESIOLOGY contains the first of what is to be a monthly, article-based continuing medical education (CME) program. Some readers might question whether another CME program or product is needed.

Numerous factors are forcing clinicians to evaluate how they obtain CME credits and specialties to assess their CME activities. Travel to CME meetings takes individuals away from family and work. In addition, travel to CME meetings with family can make serious learning a challenge. Of note, the Accreditation Council of Continuing Medical Education has increased its scrutiny of CME programs and the participation of individuals. The American Board of Anesthesiology, and indeed all 24 medical specialties which comprise the American Board of Medical Specialties, is moving toward a certification model based on "maintenance of certification" and "life-long learning and self-assessment."<sup>1</sup> Assessment of professional competence is also being developed on several fronts.<sup>2</sup> Although performance is different from CME, surely they are linked. All these factors and more have contributed to the changing landscape of CME.

The American Society of Anesthesiologists and the American Board of Anesthesiology convened a Strategic Planning Committee in the fall of 2003 to assess current American Society of Anesthesiologists CME programs and determine the need, if any, for the development of additional CME products. Starting a CME program in ANESTHESIOLOGY was enthusiastically endorsed.

Each month, one article will be chosen to be the focus of the journal-based CME program which, when successfully completed, will award participants up to 1 h of Category 1 CME credit toward the Accreditation Council of Continuing Medical Education's Physician Recogni-

tion Award. Readers may wonder about the value of 1 h of CME credit. However, if an individual successfully completes the new program every month, the number of CME credits obtained in a year will equal approximately one-half of the annual requirement for Category 1 credits (25) and more than one-third of the credits that are needed annually as defined by the American Board of Anesthesiology for maintenance of certification (35).<sup>1</sup> We hope the ease with which CME credits can be obtained through this new program, as well as the value of its content, will be appealing to American Society of Anesthesiologists members and other qualified individuals.

It is our intent to make the process of obtaining journal-based CME credits straightforward and beneficial. There will undoubtedly be some growing pains. However, with constructive criticism from participants, I am confident that ANESTHESIOLOGY's new CME program will be educational and convenient and will allow practitioners to obtain clinically valuable information in one more manner. What's more, the cost is very modest: American Society of Anesthesiologists members pay only \$10.00 per test or \$60.00 for the full year; the fee for nonmembers is \$15.00 per test or \$90.00 for the year.

For further information, please see the CME section starting on page 249 of this issue or visit the CME Web site at [www.asahq.org/journal-cme](http://www.asahq.org/journal-cme). The Web site has a feedback link where participants can comment on the Journal's new CME activity.

So follow the instructions, and let us know what you think and how the program can be improved!

## References

1. Matjasko MJ: Report from the president. ABA News 2003(June); 16(1):1-3
2. Gabel RA: Performance measurement. ASA Newsletter 2003; 67(11):5-8

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