

Needs Assessments and Learning Objectives

What is a needs assessment?

An *educational needs assessment* is essential to ensure that the CME sessions you plan will actually meet your members' needs. A needs assessment can be performed by way of questionnaire mailed to each member, a survey published in your newsletter, a focus group, or other methods. Careful scrutiny of evaluations and comments from earlier CME programs will also be very helpful in selecting topics and speakers for your programs.

Are there criteria for selecting topics?

Yes! To meet the criteria for AAPA Category 1 CME credit, a session must:

- Be balanced and have relevance to PA practice either through their ability to improve patient care or to provide better systems of health care.
- Be based on topics derived from an assessment of the needs of PAs.
- Be formally planned and designed as part of an ongoing CME activity.
- Demonstrate high educational, ethical, and medical standards.
- Include explicit learning objectives.
- Include a participant evaluation method assessing the quality of the program as well as the extent to which it met the stated learning objectives.
- Be free of product-specific advertising, promotional logos, or slogans.
- Meet AAPA's Standards for Commercial Support of CME programs.

Who should write the learning objectives?

For many years, constituent organization CME committees have relied on speakers to provide learning objectives. Doing so causes two problems:

- The educational needs of your members may be unknown to an invited speaker,
- Speakers rarely submit learning objectives in a timely manner, delaying the approval process for the entire program.

To avoid these problems, *the CME committee should determine learning objectives for all CME sessions; faculty must not develop objectives for their own presentation.* Once written, the learning objectives should be sent to the invited speaker along with a brief description of relevant characteristics of the target audience. At that time, speakers may suggest revisions to the learning objectives with approval from the CME committee.

Do you have tips for writing effective learning objectives?

Learning objectives should use action verbs and should reflect measurable outcomes (via demonstration or post-testing). Examples of some action verbs are: conduct, demonstrate, describe, discuss, evaluate, examine, identify, initiate, list, name, review, recognize. Page 3 of this document includes a comprehensive list of action verbs. The word “understand” should never be used in a learning objective because it is not measurable.

SAMPLE TOPICS AND THEIR LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Managed Care Trends: Focus on the Future

At the conclusion of this session, the participant will be able to:

1. Discuss characteristics that make a practice attractive to a managed care network
2. Describe how to educate supervising physicians or practice administrators about PA contributions to an effective managed care practice
3. Educate the contract negotiators in their practice so that PAs are appropriately included when managed care contracts are signed
4. Explain financing/payment mechanisms of managed care, such as capitation and discounted fee-for-service

Basic Suture and Wound Care Techniques Workshop 1

At the conclusion of this session, the participant will be able to:

1. Identify several aspects of wound healing theory
2. Discuss basic wound management
3. Describe suture and needle selection
4. Demonstrate wound closure

Osteoporosis: Turning Clinical Pitfalls into Clinical Pearls

At the conclusion of this session, the participant will be able to:

1. Recognize the clinical features and complications of osteoporosis
2. Describe bone differentiation and microarchitecture
3. Identify new guidelines for prevention & treatment of osteoporosis (both primary and secondary, e.g. glucocorticoid-induced) via pharmacologic therapy
4. Interpret bone mineral density results
5. Discriminate therapy choices which provide fast fracture protection
6. Identify alternatives to HRT therapy for osteoporosis prevention and treatment

Urinary Incontinence

At the conclusion of this session, the participant will be able to:

1. Define urinary incontinence as it applies to both men and women
2. Identify structural and neurological factors to consider in diagnosis
3. Recommend appropriate treatments: surgical, medical, physical therapy (exercise)

VERBS FOR LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Select an action verb that specifies what the learner will be able to do after completion of the activity. The following table reflects the action verbs typically associated with the development of learning objectives. This list includes verbs found in Rosof's CME Primer.

Analysis

Analyze
Appraise
Calculate
Categorize
Compare
Contrast
Criticize
Debate
Diagram
Differentiate
Distinguish
Examine
Experiment
Inspect
Inventory
Question
Relate
Separate
Solve
Summarize
Test

Application

Apply
Complete
Demonstrate
Dramatize
Employ
Examine
Illustrate
Interpret
Operate
Order
Practice
Predict
Restate
Schedule
Shop
Sketch
Treat
Use

Comprehension

Classify Compare
Describe

Discuss
Estimate
Explain
Express
Identify
Locate
Recognize
Report
Restate
Review
Tell
Translate

Evaluation

Appraise`
Assess
Choose
Compare
Estimate
Evaluate
Judge
Measure
Rate
Revise
Score
Select
Value
Plan

Knowledge

Count
Define
Identify
List
Name
Recall
Recognize
Record
Relate
Repeat
Select
Tabulate
Underline

Synthesis

Arrange
Assemble
Collect
Compose
Construct
Create
Design
Detect
Formulate
Generalize
Integrate
Manage
Organize