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Continuing Education Requirement for Pharmacists Licensed in the State of Hawaii

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. *When did the law take effect?*

Governor Lingle signed Act 165 on July 2, 2004, officially making Hawaii the last state to require continuing education ("CE") as a condition for re-licensure for pharmacists. (See §461-8, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS))

At that time, a copy of the new law was mailed out to current licensees.

2. *What does the law require?*

All Hawaii licensed pharmacists must complete a minimum of 30 hours of approved continuing education during each licensing biennium and prior to December 31 of every odd numbered year (when pharmacists renew).

3. *When does a Hawaii licensed pharmacist need to meet these new CE requirements?*

Hawaii licensed pharmacists began taking their CE courses from January 1, 2006 for the December 2007 renewal because beginning with the renewal for the licensing biennium commencing on January 1, 2008, and every biennial renewal thereafter, each licensee shall have completed 30 hours of approved CE.

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4. *Who does this law apply to?*

All Hawaii licensed pharmacists must complete a minimum of 30 hours of approved CE, regardless of the licensee's initial date of licensure. Only licensees who have graduated from an accredited pharmacy school within one year of their first renewal period shall not be subject to the CE requirement.

5. *What courses qualify as CE?*

"Continuing education courses" mean courses approved by the ACPE (American College of Pharmaceutical Education nka Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education) or continuing medical education ("CME") courses that serve to improve patient safety and to maintain quality national standards in the prevention of medical errors.

"Credit hours", except as otherwise provided, means the value assigned to sixty minutes of instruction.

All ACPE approved courses are acceptable towards the CE requirement. CME courses must "serve to improve patient safety and maintain quality national standards in the prevention of medical errors".

The Board will be posting approved CME courses on their web page, however if you've already taken a CME course that is not on the approved list, you must send in the course description for Board review and approval.

6. *What happens if I do not complete the required 30 hours before my license is renewed?*

Your pharmacist license will not be renewed and you will not be allowed to practice as a pharmacist in this State until that time your license is restored by completing the CE requirement, payment of the renewal and penalty fees.

Also, since the pharmacy permit has a dependency with the pharmacist-in-charge, as the pharmacist-in-charge of record, if your pharmacist license is not renewed, the permit for the pharmacy will not be processed and no business shall be conducted until the permit and license is renewed.

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7. *Are there exceptions for not completing the CE requirement?*

Yes. The Board of Pharmacy may extend the deadline for compliance with the CE requirement based on any of the following:

- (1) Illness, as certified by a physician licensed under Chapter 453 or 460, or licensed in the jurisdiction in which the licensee was treated;
- (2) Military service under extended active duty with the armed forces of the United States;
- (3) Lack of access to continuing education courses due to practice of pharmacy in geographically isolated areas; and
- (4) Inability to undertake continuing education due to incapacity, undue hardship, or other extenuating circumstances.

You must submit documentation to substantiate the reason for not being able to complete the CE requirement for Board review and approval of any extension request.

8. *Do I need to submit proof of CE when I renew my license?*

No. When you renew, if you completed the CE requirement, there will be able to sign an attestation that you completed the CE requirement. After the renewal period, the Board will conduct a random audit; those selected will be notified by mail to submit proof of their CE within 60 days of notification.

If you did not complete the CE requirement, you may not be able to renew your pharmacist license.

If you are selected and you fail to meet the CE requirement, disciplinary action will be taken against your pharmacist license for submitting a false statement on your renewal application which can result in a fine, revocation, suspension or other disciplinary action against your pharmacist license.