

## **NC-CME SIGNS AGREEMENT TO DEVELOP EXAM FOR CME PROFESSIONALS**

Contact: Judy Ribble  
Executive Director, NC-CME  
505-281-1143  
[jribble@NC-CME.org](mailto:jribble@NC-CME.org)  
[www.NC-CME.org](http://www.NC-CME.org)

Sandia Park, NM  
October 23, 2007

The National Commission for Certification of CME Professionals (NC-CME) has contracted with Schroeder Measurement Technologies (SMT), an internationally recognized developer of validated testing instruments for credentialing examinations, to help develop a credentialing program for persons working in the field of continuing medical education (CME).

"We've spent more than a year carefully considering pathways and potential partners for this major project," said Jack Kues, PhD, President of NC-CME. "Now that we've identified SMT and executed the agreement, we can begin work quickly to accomplish this critically important goal in the CME industry. The credentialing process will include documenting a candidate's experience and educational qualifications, as well as performance on a validated exam." Other professional organizations that have worked with SMT to develop certification programs include the American Nurses Credentialing Center; American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology; American Gastroenterological Association; Board of Nephrology Examiners; National Academy of Sports Medicine; and the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy.

The agreement calls for SMT to pilot an examination in May, 2008, with the final version scheduled to be released in June. The timing and process of administering the exam to CME professionals will be determined after the pilot has been validated. The immediate next steps include a detailed job analysis to document the duties and responsibilities of a wide range of workers in CME. Recognized experts in the field will also be recruited to assist in the validation of the job analysis and the exam question writing process. The final examination is one portion of a credentialing process that includes education and experience. In order to be eligible to sit for the examination, individuals will have to complete an application process that elicits information on formal education, continuing education, employment background, and other experiences related to CME. "We believe that competent CME Professionals need to be able to do more than pass an exam," noted Dr. Kues. "We are working on a point system that will document their general knowledge and experience with educating practicing physicians."

The current work of NC-CME builds on years of work and educational programs developed by several CME organizations. The Alliance for Continuing Medical Education, the Society for Academic Continuing Medical Education, the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education, and several other groups have been addressing the issues related to developing competent CME workers for many years. Their educational programs have been the foundation for keeping CME workers informed and supporting their efforts to improve their ability to promote quality patient care. These educational programs will continue to be critical to helping CME workers maintain knowledge and skills as well as providing them specific information that will help them prepare for to the certification examination.

The Certified CME Professional credential (CCMEP) is expected to become an important measure of competence for CME professionals, who develop and distribute educational activities essential to more than 600,000 practicing physicians in the United States. In the face of closer scrutiny by government and the public, educators and their funding sources are experiencing increasing pressure to demonstrate the integrity of CME programs. The NC-CME certification will benefit the health of the public by giving organizations a way to verify the knowledge and skills of

their CME staff and their ability to be compliant with national guidelines developed by the Accreditation Council for CME (ACCME), the Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General (HHS OIG).

# # #

NC-CME is a private, non-profit, tax-exempt organization created in 2006 by an independent group of CME professionals committed to serving the public by creating a standard of competence for persons who create, deliver, and/or support CME programs. NC-CME is incorporated in New Mexico and operates under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States. [www.NC-CME.org](http://www.NC-CME.org)