

AAFP'S CME REPORTING TOOL: Member Benefit or Administrative Burden

Lucille Killgore (Florida) & Kate Mahler (Ohio)

Napa, California where you are...



Buffalo, NY where I am...



**Missing you all terribly...
for many reasons!**

AAFP'S CME REPORTING TOOL AS A PRIMARY MEMBER BENEFIT

- The AAFP's recent membership report noted that the CME Reporting Tool is considered by members one of the AAFP's most valuable member benefits.
 - Serves as a vehicle for members to report CME to both the AAFP and the ABFM, as well as other licensing Boards through CE Broker
 - Because of its perceived convenience, this member benefit is considered a “golden handcuff” of membership (a reason to belong to the Academy.)

CME REPORTER TOOL: Current Limitations

How the AAFP CME Transcript Looks Like

The Core Problem

CME credit submitted via the AAFP Reporting Tool does not recognize CME for its full value which is a problem when the credit is transmitted to the ABFM and to CE Broker.

- A member who submits their CME credit using the AAFP's CME Reporting Tool must either report it as "Prescribed" or "Elective."

Credits that are Prescribed are those approved by the AAFP; all other credits not approved by AAFP are Elective, including those approved by the American Medical Association (AMA) and the American Osteopathic Association (AOA).

2024					
Date	Title	P Credits	E Credits		
01/15/2024	ABFM Behavioral Health Care Knowledge Self-Assessment (KSA) American Board of Family Medicine	8.00	0.00		
01/16/2024	ABFM Pain Medicine Knowledge Self-Assessment (KSA) American Board of Family Medicine	8.00	0.00		
01/16/2024	Diabetes PI Activity American Board of Family Medicine	20.00	0.00		
01/17/2024	ABFM Care of Women Knowledge Self-Assessment (KSA) American Board of Family Medicine	8.00	0.00		
01/18/2024	Online Board Review Questions : Mixed Review 1 Random Board Review Questions 01 American Academy of Family Physicians	0.25	0.00		
01/19/2024	Formal Activity - AMA/AOA Approved: Opioid Use Disorder: Primary Care Review (Buprenorphine Basics)	0.00	1.25		
01/22/2024	Formal Activity - AMA/AOA Approved: Sugar and Spice - Not all Things are Nice: Substance Abuse in Adolescence	0.00	1.00		
01/23/2024	Formal Activity - AMA/AOA Approved: Smoking Cessation Strategies	0.00	1.00		
01/23/2024	Formal Activity - AMA/AOA Approved: Addiction & Trauma: The Perfect (Brain)Storm	0.00	1.00		
01/23/2024	Formal Activity - AMA/AOA Approved: The Fentanyl Crisis from a Law Enforcement Officer's Perspective	0.00	1.00		
01/24/2024	Formal Activity - AMA/AOA Approved: FAFP Florida Mandatory Controlled Substance CME Webinar	0.00	2.00		
			Prescribed	Elective	Total P&E
Total Credits:			44.25	7.25	51.50

Reporting Credit From The AAFP to the ABFM

- When the AAFP transmits reported credits to the ABFM, they are sent with no course detail – only as a Prescribed total and an Elective total.
- The ABFM recognizes Prescribed credits as Division I and Elective credits as Division II.
- AMA Category I credit and AOA Category IA activities **not** approved by the AAFP are only recognized as Elective credit.



The ABFM requires that 50% of the CME submitted for Board certification be Division I certified.

Why is this a problem:

- ❖ Diminishes the credit options available to members; undermines the value of AMA and AOA accredited activities by excluding these educational activities from being counted toward Division I requirements, thereby reducing the total CME credits physicians can apply toward fulfilling Division I credits
- ❖ Physicians can directly report to ABFM the AMA or AOA credits taken to count towards Division I, but this defeats the purpose of streamlining the reporting process for members

ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN

OHIO CASE

- The glitch in the AAFP's CME Reporting Tool came to light for the Ohio chapter in 2024 when two members contacted our office to seek assistance when they received notice from the ABFM that they were losing their Board certification due to lack of CME.

In both cases, the members had more than enough CME in all categories; however, because there is no detail provided to the ABFM from the AAFP, all of the Elective credits were recognized as Division II – even those that were accredited as AMA Category I and AOA Category IA. The solution by OAFP staff was to work outside of the AAFP CME Reporting tool and resubmit the AMA Category I credit to the ABFM as Division I and it worked!

Although the result was positive, the solution caused administrative burden for the physician, the staff, and rendered the AAFP's CME Reporting Tool nearly useless.

Working outside the current AAFP CME credit reporting system imposes duplicate efforts in tracking CME categories and creates unnecessary barriers for physicians striving to meet their professional development obligations.



AAFP & ABFM: WORKING TOGETHER TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE

The AAFP & ABFM recognize that there is a significant issue with their reporting process, and have been working to rectify the issue. The OAFP staff has been working with Brian Edwards and members of the Education and Membership teams at the AAFP as well as contacts at the ABFM to move this issue forward.

Brian Edwards shared the following about changes/plans between AAFP & ABFM:

- AAFP staff had their second meeting with ABFM staff about the Division I & Division II reporting issue (10/29/24).
- In the meeting, the teams identified a possible reporting system improvement that they believe would go a long way toward addressing the CME reporting issues raised.
- The identified system improvement will require back-end IT work for both the AAFP and ABFM, and will necessitate close coordination between both orgs to bring online.
- The plan is to have this work completed, or at least ready for an update, by late January/early February, 2025.
- The plan is to make a broader announcement to chapters about the system update closer to when the changes are ready to be implemented.
- In the meantime, AAFP and ABFM staff agreed they are able to continue to resolve member issues on a case-by-case basis as they arise.
- The staff from both organizations agreed to make progress toward alleviating this issue a standing item in the Dyad meetings (ongoing cross-org meeting), with a goal of measuring overall success a year from now.

AAFP REPORTING CME TO CE BROKER

CE BROKER

- A platform that helps track, manage, and report CE requirements for licensure. It connects licensing/state medical boards and licensees to streamline compliance and ensure up-to-date credentials.
- CE Broker and the AAFP have an agreement to transmit CME to certain state medical boards – Ohio and Florida being two of them

CURRENTLY REPORTED

- AAFP only shares a transcript of Prescribed CME that was completed by the reporting physician within a specific time period. The CME on the transcript must be produced by the AAFP or a state chapter only.
- **No** AMA Category I, **NO** AOA Category IA (Physicians have to report this CME on their own.)

CE BROKER: AAFP'S ACTION

Brian Edwards shared the following regarding the issues related to CE Broker:

- We are working to expand our web service for six additional states. We're expecting CE Broker to sign with a couple more states in 2025. At this time, CE Broker will only accept CME from the AAFP that is "primary source verified" which limits us to reporting only AAFP and AAFP chapter CME.
- We are having ongoing conversations with CE Broker about accepting additional credit reporting information from the AAFP.
- To date CE Broker has been unable to accommodate this request, citing that they are unable to accept additional information due to system limitations on their end. *(Ohio's CE Broker representative says that their company is able to accept the required information, which is inconsistent with AAFP's claim.)*
- We are prioritizing transmitting local regional CME completion information as a next step in our conversations with CE Broker and will keep chapters informed as we have any information to report. *(In the case of Ohio regional chapter, Prescribed credits are not reported by AAFP to CE Broker)*

CHANGE IN 2025 & OUR CALL TO ACTION

- Continue to monitor for change in 2025; Encourage members to share feedback CME reporting tool's usability; Advocate for improvements that reduce unnecessary administrative tasks.
- OAFP has prepared a resolution for the 2025 Congress of Delegates if the problem is not resolved to our members satisfaction. (*Draft attached*). We would love your feedback and support.

SUMMARY:

- While the current AAFP CME reporting tool remains a valuable member benefit, there is a clear need to reduce the administrative burden on members.
 - Simplifying the reporting process, recognizing/labeling courses as AMA Category I credits as Division I (for ABFM), and offering customizable tracking options (for CE Broker) that could enhance usability.

THANK YOU



Aligning the Continuing Medical Education (CME) Reporting Tool with Members' Needs

WHEREAS the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) requires members to report at least 150 credits of approved CME every three calendar years and at least 75 of those credits must be AAFP Prescribed credits, and

WHEREAS the AAFP has a CME reporting tool through which members can enter their CME credit; and

WHEREAS the AAFP's CME reporting tool is rated by members as one of the AAFP's "most-valued service¹;" and

WHEREAS the majority of family physicians in the United States are board certified by the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM)², and

WHEREAS the AAFP has a long-standing agreement with the ABFM to transmit CME entered into the AAFP CME Reporting Tool as a mechanism to assist members in meeting their ABFM certification requirements, and

WHEREAS the AAFP CME Reporting Tool categorizes CME credits³ as "Prescribed" and "Elective," while the ABFM categorizes CME credit as "Division 1" and "Division 2", and

WHEREAS the AAFP "Elective" credit includes activities that have been designated by the American Medical Association (AMA) Physician's Recognition Award (PRA) Category 1 CreditTM or have been approved by the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) as Category 1 credit, and

WHEREAS only AAFP Prescribed credit is reported to the ABFM as equivalent to the ABFM's Division 1 credit, and

WHEREAS a minimum of 50% of the total required CME credits reported for ABFM-certified physicians must be Division I credit which should include AMA and AOA approved credits⁴, and

WHEREAS the AAFP's agreement with the ABFM that "Prescribed" credits count for "Division I" credit and "Elective" credit count for "Division 2," results in valuable member CME credit being transmitted to the wrong "Division" resulting in physicians becoming board-ineligible, and

WHEREAS this discrepancy is not clearly communicated to members on the CME reporting dashboard, and

WHEREAS this discrepancy has the significant potential to cause members to jeopardize their ability to practice medicine and increases members' administrative burden, and

WHEREAS the AAFP also has an agreement with several state medical boards, through its agreement with CE Broker, to transmit only AAFP Prescribed CME activities produced by the AAFP or state chapter for state licensure requirements, and

WHEREAS, similar to the miscategorization of CME that is taking place at the ABFM, CE Broker categorizes CME credit as either Category 1 or Elective credit respectively, and

WHEREAS the AAFP includes as part of its mission statement that it strives to "reduce administrative complexity that detracts from patient care"⁵, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the AAFP transmit members' CME information to the AFBM in a format that allows the ABFM to correctly place Prescribed and Category 1 CME credits in their correct Division; and be it further

RESOLVED that the AAFP work with CE Broker to transmit from the AAFP CME reporting tool, AAFP Prescribed credit along with AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ or CME credit that has been approved by the AOA as Category 1 credit as proof of completion.

Fiscal Note: ?

1. <https://www.aafp.org/membership/welcome-center/get-started/report-cme.mem.html>
2. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3090428/#:~:text=Eighty-five%20percent%20of%20all,were%20participating%20in%20MC-FP>
3. <https://www.aafp.org/cme/about/types.html#elective>
4. <https://www.theabfm.org/continue-certification/cme/>
5. <https://www.aafp.org/about/who-is-the-aafp/vision-mission.html>