



# UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES



## SUBJECT: USUHS Continuing Education Programs for Health Professionals

Instruction 1321 MAR 29 2012

(SVP)

### ABSTRACT

This Instruction establishes policies and assigns responsibilities for the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) continuing education programs for health professionals.

#### **A. Reissuance and Purpose.**

The purpose of this Instruction is to reissue USUHS Instruction 1321<sup>a</sup> and to establish policies and assign responsibilities for maintaining the USUHS continuing education programs for health professionals that meet the national accreditation standards for health professionals and the credentialing criteria of State boards of medicine, nursing, and dentistry.

#### **B. References.** *See Enclosure 1.*

#### **C. Applicability.**

The provisions of this Instruction apply to all USUHS activities sponsoring continuing education (CE) programs for health professionals within the Military Health System (MHS).

#### **D. Background.**

Under Title 10, United States Code, Chapter 104, Section 2113<sup>b</sup>, the USUHS shall “establish programs in continuing medical education for military members of the health professions to the end that high standards of health care may be maintained within the military medical services.”

#### **E. Definitions.** *See Enclosure 2.*

#### **F. Policy.**

It is USUHS policy to promote continued professional growth of health professionals within the MHS by maintaining a climate conducive to self-developing, planning and implementing CE programs meeting national accreditation standards for continuing education for health professionals, and arranging, insofar as possible, for the awarding of CE credit hours. Specifically:

1. CE is a legitimate mission of the USUHS and will be supported on a basis comparable to other USUHS activities commensurate with existing resources.

2. USUHS has an obligation to support CE programs to the extent appropriate to the mission of the USUHS and commensurate with existing resources.

3. CE is essential to the USUHS as an incentive for remote and adjunct faculty and as a major tool of ambassadorship.

4. CE programs sponsored by the USUHS will be primarily for the benefit of health professionals within the MHS but may be opened to non-MHS health professionals on a reimbursable basis as space is available.

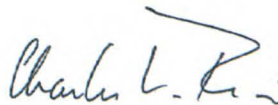
#### **G. Responsibilities.**

1. Deans and department chairs are responsible for determining what CE programs can and should be offered or sponsored by the USUHS and for designating CE program coordinators.

2. CE program coordinators are responsible for the development of program agendas, the selection of program faculty, and the overall coordination of programs to ensure compliance with guidelines established by relevant accrediting agencies for CE.

3. Individual health professionals employed by or assigned to the USUHS are ultimately responsible for maintaining required professional licenses--to include completing all requirements when enrolled in CE programs, verifying submission of CE credits, and when serving as instructors, ensuring compliances with conflict of interest standards and requirements.

#### **H. Procedures.** *See Enclosure 3.*



Charles L. Rice, M.D.  
President

#### **Enclosures:**

1. References
2. Definitions
3. Procedure

**REFERENCES**

- (a) USUHS Instruction 1321, "Development of USUHS Continuing Education Programs," dated May 22, 2003 (hereby canceled).
- (b) Title 10, United States Code, Chapter 104, "Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences," Section 2113, "Administration of University."
- (c) USUHS Instruction 5136, "USUHS Continuing Nursing Education Advisory Council," dated May 3, 2011.



## DEFINITIONS

### 1. Accrediting Agencies for Continuing Education:

Organizations established for the purpose of ensuring that continuing education programs are properly accredited. Accrediting bodies for USUHS CE programs for health professionals include:

a. Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) - The official accrediting body for Continuing Medical Education (CME) programs. The ACCME is comprised of representatives from the American Board of Medical Specialties, the American Hospital Association, the American Medical Association, the Association of American Medical Colleges, the Association for Hospital Medical Education, the Council of Medical Specialty Societies, and the Federation of State Medical Boards.

b. American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation - The official national accrediting body for continuing nursing education programs. The Commission on Accreditation is responsible for developing and administering the operational policies, procedures, and criteria which govern both the accreditation and approval process.

c. American College of Healthcare Professionals (ACHE) - The national credentialing body for Certified Healthcare Executives and Fellows of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

d. American Psychological Association (APA) - The national accrediting body for continuing education for psychologists.

e. Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners - The official accrediting body for social workers established by Maryland law.

f. Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education - The official national accrediting body for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians.

### 2. Continuing Education for Health Professionals:

Planned educational activities intended to further the education and training of specific groups of health professionals for the enhancement of practice, education, administration, and research. Organized programs of study leading to a degree are generally not considered continuing education.

### 3. Continuing Medical Education:

Continuing Medical Education consists of educational activities that maintain, develop, or increase the knowledge, skills, and professional performance and relationships which a physician uses to provide services for patients, the public, or the medical profession. The content of CME is that body of knowledge and skills generally recognized and accepted by the medical profession as being within the basic medical sciences, the discipline of clinical medicine, and the provision of health care to the public, as defined by the American Medical Association.

**4. Continuing Nursing Education:**

Systematic professional learning experiences designed to augment the knowledge, skills and attitudes of nurses and therefore enrich the nurses' contributions to quality health care, and their pursuit of professional career goals, as defined by the American Nurses Association.

**5. Sponsor/Provider:**

An individual, institution, organization, or agency responsible for the development, implementation, evaluation, financing, record-keeping, and quality of continuing education activities.

## PROCEDURES

### A. Background:

1. USUHS, as an academic health center, is expected to continue to build on the educational and experiential bases of the faculty who are expected to continue to build on the educational, administrative, research and theory development to continue to improve the health of beneficiaries and maintain professional competence.

2. Professional competence is increasingly subjected to mandated requirements. These requirements range from programs for certification by professional organizations to State and Federal statutes regulating licensure.

3. Continuing Education for Health Professionals is accomplished in many venues. Making arrangements for CE credit hours is a shared responsibility of CE program managers (assisted by department administrators, contractors, and professional organizations) and individual health professionals.

### B. Providing, Sponsoring, and Funding CE Activities:

1. USUHS schools, departments, and other supported activities will plan for provided and sponsored CE programs, and request necessary funds annually with the fiscal year budget call.

2. CE program managers, assisted by department administrators, will arrange for CE accreditation, with assistance from contract and professional organization sponsors as necessary.

3. USUHS schools, departments, and other supported activities will assess CE outcomes at the end of each budget year.