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To: Board Members **Date:** August 3, 2018

From: Madhu Chawla, OD, Chair **Telephone:** (916) 575-7170
Practice and Education Committee

Subject: **Agenda Item 8C. – Update, Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Board Committee Reports: Practice and Education Committee**

C. Practice and Education Committee (PEC)

Audio pending: [May 22, 2018](#)
Audio pending: [June 29, 2018](#)

Requested Actions: The PEC recommends that the full board direct staff to begin a regulatory change to increase the number of CE hours that can be completed online from 20 hours to 25 hours.

The PEC met twice since the last Board meeting. In addition to voting to recommend to the Board an increase in the number of online CE hours allowed, the PEC reviewed 71 continuing education courses to determine if they met the requirements pursuant to California Code of Regulations (CCR) § [1536](#) (g):

- (1) Whether the program is likely to contribute to the advancement of professional skills and knowledge in the practice of optometry.
- (2) Whether the instructors, lecturers, and others participating in the presentation are recognized by the Board as being qualified in their field.
- (3) Whether the proposed course is open to all optometrists licensed in this State.
- (4) Whether the provider of any mandatory continuing optometric education course agrees to maintain and furnish to the Board and/or attending licensee such records of course content and attendance as the Board requires, for a period of at least three years from the date of course presentation.

Out of the 71 courses reviewed, 67 were approved and four were returned to the providers for additional information. Since the last PEC meeting, 18 additional courses have been submitted (as of July, 2018) and are pending review. The PEC will likely hold another meeting in early October to review the pending courses.

The PEC also voted against recommending a regulatory change to allow optometrists to receive CE for presenting to dispensing optician educational programs.

Attachment

PEC Online Continuing Education Memo



Memo

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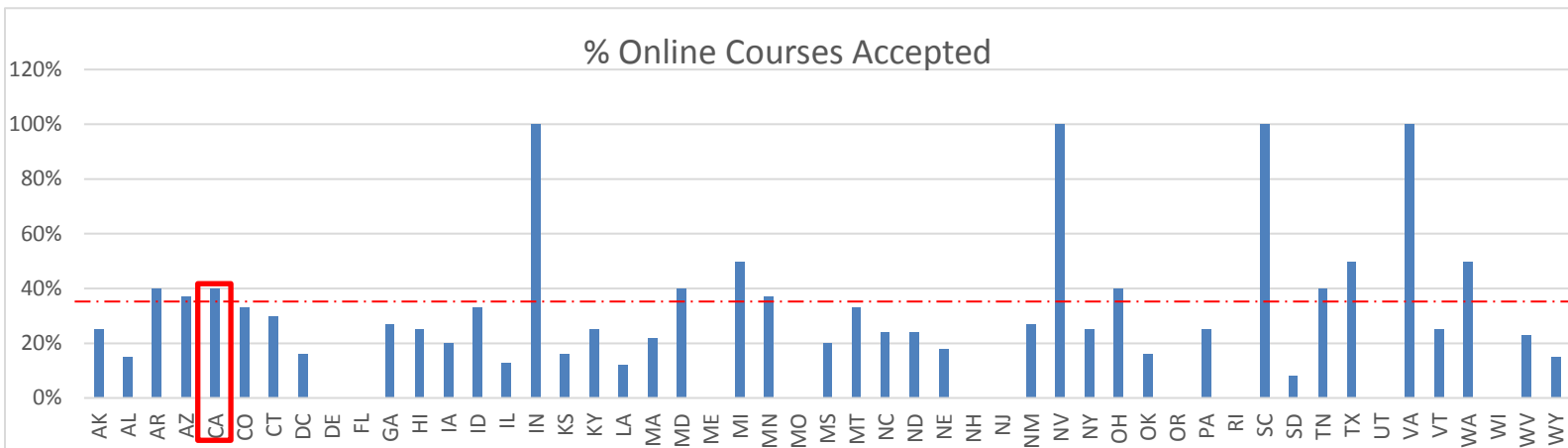
To: PEC Committee Members **Date:** June 29, 2018

From: Jessica Sieferman **Telephone:** (916) 575-7184
 Executive Officer

Subject: **Agenda Item 5 - Discussion Regarding Accepting More Online Continuing Education Courses; Possible Recommendations to the Full Board**

During a prior meeting, Dr. Turetsky requested the Board consider allowing more online continuing education courses and provided the attached document outlining his support (Attachment 1). Currently, the Board allows up to 40% (20 hours) of the required continuing education to be “[d]ocumented and accredited self-study through correspondence or an electronic medium” (CCR § [1536](#) (c)(1)).

According to data collected by the Association of Regulatory Boards in 2016/17, four states accept up to 100% online courses (IN, NV, SC, VA) and ten do not accept any (DE, FL, ME, MO, NH, NJ, OR, RI, UT, WI). Those accepting online courses allow, on average, up to 35% of the required continuing education to be completed online.



A previous concern raised was that licensees would be able to initiate an online course, walk away for the duration, and still receive credit. Some states, like Colorado and Arkansas, for example, address this concern by requiring the online courses be interactive and approved by COPE.

Action Requested:

Since the Practice and Education Committee (PEC) is charged with reviewing, approving and recommending continuing education matters, staff encourages the PEC to discuss the issue and make recommendations to the Board during the August Board meeting.

Prepared by Dr. David Turetsky, OD, Vice President

Expanding Correspondence and On-Line CE Courses for License Renewal

Current statute requires optometrists with TPA or more advanced certification to obtain a minimum of 50 hours of CE units for license renewal every 2 years. Of these 50 hours, a maximum of 20 hours may be obtained through correspondence or on-line CE courses. This 20 hour limit was put in place more than 15 years ago when on-line courses were not as prevalent and there were few, if any, interactive courses available. Now would be an opportune time to expand avenues for license renewal and reduce or eliminate the requirement that an optometrist physically attend a CE program in order to fulfill renewal requirements.

Advantages of in-person CE:

1. Ability to meet and discuss issues with other OD's.
2. Ability to ask questions and interact with the presenters.

Disadvantages of in-person CE:

1. Time away from office or personal activities. (CE is usually an all-day affair).
2. Cost—Many OD's travel from substantial distances to attend CE. Aside from fuel expenses, there are meals and often lodging to consider.
3. Limited CE availability for O.D.'s in very rural or isolated areas. If one lives near an optometry school/college or in a large urban area, CE opportunities are often abundant. However, for O.D.'s living in areas such as Eureka, Crescent City or Bishop, CE events are very limited.
4. Somewhat limited choice of CE topics.

Advantages of on-line CE:

1. Abundant and varied courses and topics.
2. Can be accessed at any time, day or night.
3. Interactive courses are available.
4. O.D.'s can set their own schedule to do anywhere from one to many hours of CE in a day. There is no need to dedicate a full day to a CE program.

Disadvantages of on-line CE:

NONE

NOTE: There will be a great deal of push back on this proposal from teaching institutions and professional associations. CE is a for profit commodity and allowing O.D.'s to meet renewal requirements on-line will have a negative financial impact on the established course providers. The Board will no doubt have an uphill battle to expand CE options however, it is in the best interest of the licensees and the public for O.D.'s to have a wide range of CE options to best serve their specific patient base.