

Continuing Education Update

December 2020

In 2018 mandatory CE for psychologists was enacted into NYS law. The law itself specified a “start date” of January 1, 2021, with a requirement of 36 CE hours (including 3 hours in ethics) accrued during a psychologist’s 3-year registration period. NYSPA had a major role in shaping this law, advocating strongly on behalf of our members and ultimate adoption of this reasonable requirement of 36 hours per three-year period, which is very much in accordance with national norms.

It was anticipated that the specific regulations (i.e., details such as requirements for becoming a CE provider, what types of courses or activities would “count”, etc.) would be put forth during the first half of 2020 with sufficient time such that public commentary (including from NYSPA) and responses from the State Education Department would be completed well before January 1, 2021.

With all the disruptions from Covid-19, where are we now?

Subsequent to an unanticipated delay, SED’s proposed regulations were released in late September, with the 60-day comment period ending November 29. SED received over 200 comments, including a strong advocacy statement from NYSPA, highlighting most significantly the importance of a delay in implementation of the “start date” of 1/1/21. It is notable that SED has just now rejected all concerns put forward by all psychological associations, institutes, and individual providers, including NYSPA’s recommendation for a delay to the start date due to the overwhelming challenges of the raging pandemic.

Please also note that during 2020 NYSPA sent a letter to SED in February to express interest in becoming a provider, and subsequently met with SED to discuss CE regulations on several occasions throughout the year. Because the regulations were not crafted at the time of these meetings, SED was not able to discuss particulars of the regulations. Most recently, when requesting a meeting during the commentary period, SED asked us to just submit formal comments in writing. As indicated above, SED has rejected all concerns, including those expressed by NYSPA. The final step, approval of regulations by the Board of Regents, occurred immediately following SED’s final recommendation.

At this time NYSPA is working to engage with the governor’s office to advocate on behalf of our membership, most specifically (but not solely) for seeking a delay in the “start date” due to the pandemic.

NYSPA is also in the process of seeking to become a NYS approved CE provider, which we anticipate will benefit our members in attaining necessary CE credits.

To recap a bit of history: Prior to initiating CE legislation several years ago, NYSPA surveyed the membership, with a resultant majority expressing support for mandatory CE. Based on the combination of 1) the surveyed majority, 2) New York having been a notable outlier in not having a CE requirement for psychologists, and 3) concern about the significant likelihood of the legislature imposing CE without NYSPA's input, the Council of Representatives voted to pursue CE legislation.

Throughout this CE process and continuing to this day, NYSPA has committed itself to strong, vigorous advocacy for legislation and regulations favorable to psychology. We also understand that ultimate outcomes are determined in Albany and lie outside NYSPA's control.

We understand and appreciate everyone's anxiety in dealing with the uncertainty that is before us. Please be assured that the NYSPA leadership is working full-force in conjunction with our lobbyist to advocate as strongly and as effectively as possible on behalf of the interests of our members and of all psychologists in NYS.

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