



North American Naturopathic Continuing Education Accreditation Council (NANCEAC)

The History: Other health care professions (medical, chiropractic, nursing, pharmacy, etc.) have a single national organization (ACCME, PACE, ANCC, ACPE, etc.) whose purpose is to accredit continuing education (CE) providers. Currently in the naturopathic profession, the burden of approving CE activities falls on the regulatory authorities (licensing and registration boards).

The Solution: The Federation of Naturopathic Medicine Regulatory Authorities (FNMRA) created the North American Naturopathic Continuing Education Accreditation Council (NANCEAC) in response to requests from regulatory authorities (licensing/registration boards and committees).

Why NANCEAC is striving to make improvements to current naturopathic CE regulation?

Just as naturopathic education is regulated (by the CNME) to provide a high and comprehensive standard of education, and naturopathic licensees/registrants are regulated for the purposes of protecting public safety, so should naturopathic continuing education be regulated and adhere to particular standards, including being free from commercial bias and addressing practice gaps. Regulatory authorities are interested in CE that will fill the need of naturopathic physicians by addressing practice gaps, instead of being solely driven by CE provider interests. When CE activities address practice gaps, practice and patient outcomes improve, thus enhancing public safety and health.

In 2015, NANCEAC began the process of developing standards for naturopathic CE, and is now accrediting CE providers. NANCEAC was developed with the input and help from naturopathic regulators and licensed naturopathic physicians.

The Benefits to Regulatory Authorities (RAs) that accept NANCEAC:

- RAs can trust that CE activities with NANCEAC accreditation will offer meaningful education that is designed to improve practice outcomes.
 - NANCEAC standards are as high as or higher than all other naturopathic CE approval organizations.
 - Each activity will be free from commercial bias.
 - Developers and presenters of CE activities will disclose all financial relationships with or support from commercial entities to the participants.
 - Each activity will address a gap in knowledge, competence, or performance in the practice of naturopathic medicine.
 - Learning assessments will be required to demonstrate the CE activity clearly addressed the learning objectives (closed the practice gap in in knowledge, competence, or performance)
 - Once accredited, the CE provider will be required to submit regular reports and be subject to audits to maintain their accreditation.
- RAs will always retain authority over CE approval. (RAs can choose to add NANCEAC-accredited providers to their lists of qualified CE providers.)

- Accepting NANCEAC will alleviate RA's workload of approving CE activities.
- There is no cost to regulatory authorities. NANCEAC will be funded by the fees the CE providers pay for accreditation.

NANCEAC improvements above current naturopathic continuing education regulation:

- NANCEAC-accredited CE activities must address a practice gap (identified by Needs Assessments and development of Learning Objectives). By addressing practice gaps, the CE activity will lead to improvements in practice outcomes.
- Each NANCEAC-accredited CE activity will be evaluated to see if learning objectives are reached.
- NANCEAC requires disclosure of relevant financial relationships (to NANCEAC and participants) for everyone involved in the development and presentation of the CE activity.
- NANCEAC monitors of each CE activity for adherence to standards by requiring reporting forms (CE development worksheet and post-activity report).
- NANCEAC-accredited CE activities encourage active learning.
- An individual is identified in each CE provider's organization (CE Program Director) who is completely responsible for adherence to NANCEAC standards.

The Ten NANCEAC Standards to which accredited CE providers must adhere

1. **Mission Statement:** The CE Provider must develop a mission statement that states:
 - How the CE Provider will address the educational needs of naturopathic physicians;
 - How the CE Provider will address the health care needs of the public (relevance to the health care needs of the public); and
 - The intended outcome of the CE (i.e., how the activity will improve the participant's contributions to quality health care and pursuits of professional goals: through changes in competence, performance, or patient outcomes).
2. **Educational Needs Assessment:** The CE Provider must assess the educational needs of naturopathic physicians. The provider should identify gaps between what naturopathic physicians currently do in practice and what is desired in practice. To assess educational needs (practice gaps), the provider may use questionnaires/surveys, interviews, focus groups, and literature review; however, periodic surveys of prospective participants are required. Each CE activity must address an educational need in the naturopathic profession.
3. **Fiduciary Relationships and Commercial Bias:** The CE Provider must ensure that all activities, from initial development to final execution, are independent from commercial bias or interest, or conflict of interest (real or apparent). The CE Provider may not accept financial support from any entity that makes its support contingent on having control over any aspect of the provider's CE activities. If the CE Provider receives any external financial or commercial support, the Provider must disclose, in writing, all terms and conditions of that financial or commercial support. Financial or commercial support includes but is not limited to grants, sponsorships, or the donation of products or services, such as food or promotional materials. Once accreditation has been awarded, the disclosure of financial or commercial support must be made available to NANCEAC (by completing the *Financial Disclosure and Attestation Form*) PRIOR to each CE activity.

4. CE Program Director: The CE Provider must identify an individual who is responsible for ensuring adherence to all NANCEAC Standards. This individual will be referred to as the CE Program Director. The CE Program Director responsibilities include, but are not limited to: ensuring adherence to all NANCEAC Standards, supervising the development of all CE activities, the content of all CE activities, and the evaluation of all CE activities.
5. Record Keeping: The CE Provider must accurately calculate* and properly document the CE credit hours applied to any CE activity. Once an activity is completed by a participant, the CE Provider must present documentation stating the credit hours earned by completing (attending/participating in) the CE activity. The CE Provider must employ a method for verifying attendance or participation in the activity. Records of credit hours earned must be maintained for five (5) years in a secure and confidential manner, and must be made available to any participant upon request.
6. Learning Objectives: The CE Provider must develop learning objectives that address the educational needs that were identified in the needs assessment (Standard 2). Learning objectives are the stepping stones that take the participant from the identified educational need to the desired result. These objectives must be specific and measurable, and should shape all aspects of the CE activity including activity content, assessment of participant learning, and evaluation of the activity. Learning objectives should be listed at the beginning of each activity in the educational materials. Because learning objectives are meant to be specific and measurable, objectives should be stated in terms of active verbs that can be measured.
7. CE Presenter: The Presenter must be selected based on qualifications, and his/her experience and ability to meet the identified educational need and to teach the subject matter. The CE Provider must ensure that the Presenter develops the activity according to the identified educational need (Standard 2) and the stated learning objectives (Standard 6).
8. Methods and Materials: The CE Provider must encourage active participation and include active learning exercises in each CE activity. Active learning can be accomplished by using a variety of techniques including pre- and post-testing, quizzes, case studies, simulation exercises, problem-solving, group discussion, etc. The educational materials for each CE activity should include additional sources of information and/or reference tools.
9. Learning Assessments: The CE Provider must coordinate with the Presenter to create learning assessments. Learning assessments should give the participants an opportunity to evaluate/measure their achievement of the learning objectives for the activity. The CE Provider can only award CE credit hours to a participant if the participant's learning has been assessed in terms of the learning objectives. The results of the learning assessments should be used to improve the quality of CE activities and evaluate overall achievement of learning objectives (Standard 6).
10. Evaluation of Activities: The CE Provider must have a structure in place for self-evaluation of each CE activity. As part of that evaluation process, participants must be provided the opportunity to evaluate each CE activity. A summary of the results of the evaluations must be provided to NANCEAC in the *Post-Activity report*. The feedback from the evaluations should be used to improve the quality of CE activities.