



American College of Preventive Medicine
physicians dedicated to prevention

Weight Management Certification Program Criteria

ACPM Certification Program

The American College of Preventive Medicine (ACPM) has developed a certification program for external programs, products and services. The program, similar to Joint Commission certification, allow firms to apply to ACPM for certification that their product or service meets rigorous, evidence-based standards for health promotion or disease prevention. Listed below are certification criteria for weight reduction and weight maintenance programs.

Weight Management Certification Criteria

ACPM has developed certification criteria based on guidelines issued by The Food and Nutrition Board (FNB) of the Institute of Medicine (IOM), National Academy of Sciences (NAS), as well as the joint effort of the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), American Heart Association (AHA), American College of Cardiology (ACC), and The Obesity Society (TOS) in their Guideline for the Management of Overweight and Obesity in Adults. The criteria for initial certification are process-oriented, i.e., they assess whether the elements of the program are consistent with current, evidence-based guidelines for effective weight management in adults. Outcomes will be assessed during recertification, when that phase of the program is available.

Certification Award Process

Once applications are reviewed by ACPM staff, they are then sent to three ACPM certification reviewers who are experts in weight management, obesity, or lifestyle medicine. These individuals conduct independent reviews, score the program against each criterion using a scorecard, and make a recommendation for or against certification based on total points, meeting essential criteria, and other factors. The ACPM Board of Regents makes the final certification decision. If there are questions or more information is needed on a specific aspect of the program during the review process, ACPM staff will contact the program. If the program is not certified, ACPM staff will provide specific feedback to explain why.

Essential Programmatic Criteria for Programs Seeking Certification:

1. Each organization must provide aggregated demographic data of their participants. Proof of targeting specific groups (such as men, women, or specific ethnic groups) must be provided to ACPM as an attachment to the application package.
2. Each organization must provide the average weight loss per unit time with minimum and maximum ranges for participants involved with the program to-date. (Note, this information is required to demonstrate that these data are collected and tracked, not for assessment of program effectiveness.)
3. Each organization must provide a detailed and specific quality plan for the program, including monitoring and follow-up with participants.
4. Each organization must have a formal avenue for feedback from participants on their opinion of the program.
5. The program provides each participant with effective strategies to maintain weight loss after program completion.

NOTE - While not required, electronic health records are encouraged

ACPM Criteria - Questions to Consider Prior to Applying for Certification

Behavior Change: Does your program include strategies that will assist clients with maintaining weight loss?

Biometric Monitoring and Measurement: Do you consistently use biometric monitoring, such as weight or blood pressure?

Client Disclosure: Does your program inform the client of the potential benefits and limitations associated with participation?

Clinical Supervision: Are health professionals involved in the administration or supervision of client participation in your program?

Exercise: Is a physical activity component integrated into your program?

Medications: Are medications prescribed? If so, what guidelines does your program follow to determine their appropriate prescription and use?

Non-Evidence Based Practices: Does your program exclude non-evidence based practices, such as liquid diets and non-prescription diet pills?

Nutrition: Is nutritional education incorporated into your program?

Nutritional Supplements: Are the use of nutritional supplements integral to participation in your program?

Risk Stratification: Does your program determine appropriate activities and expectations based on the medical conditions of individual clients?

Safety of Weight Loss Progression: Are client weight loss goals meaningful and realistic?

Social Support: Are social supports, such as family, friends, health coaches, or teams incorporated into the program?

Weight Maintenance: Does your program include a weight maintenance phase?

Recertification

ACPM certification remains in effect for three years. If successfully certified, each organization would have the opportunity to undergo re-certification every 3 years. If significant changes (e.g., in methodology, population of focus, etc.) to the program occur before the end of the 3 years, then the program must undergo re-certification in order to continue as an ACPM-certified program. Programs undergoing re-certification will also be required to provide aggregated outcomes data to ACPM for evaluation.

About ACPM and for More Information

The American College of Preventive Medicine (ACPM) is the national professional society for physicians committed to disease prevention and health promotion. ACPM was established in 1954. Its 2,700 members are engaged in preventive medicine practice, teaching and research. Specialists in preventive medicine are uniquely trained in both clinical medicine and public health. They have the skills needed to understand and reduce the risks of disease, disability and death in individuals and in population groups. For more information, visit www.acpm.org. To learn more about the certification program, please visit the ACPM [website](#) or contact Dani Pere, Associate Executive Director, Programs and Operations, at dpere@acpm.org.