Background information:

Beginning October 2007, the Connecticut General Statutes required that all physicians must complete a minimum of 50 contact hours of continuing medical education every two years in order to be eligible for medical license renewal. Such CME had to include at least one contact hour of training in risk management, sexual assault, domestic violence, and infectious diseases, including AIDS and HIV. In October 2010, the state of Connecticut included cultural competency as an additional requirement.

What requirements have changed regarding Connecticut CME medical license renewal?

During the 2013 Connecticut General Assembly, thanks to the exclusive advocacy efforts led by FCMA’s president Robin Oshman, MD, Ph.D, the Association sought the introduction of and testified in support of two bills that would have repealed the requirement to retake the mandated CME topics. While the legislators did not repeal the necessity to repeat the mandated topics, it reduced the frequency with which physicians must take the mandatory topics for CME. Instead of being required to take mandated CME topics every two years, the new interval cycle is now every six years. The legislators also added behavioral health to the list of topics.

Why did FCMA advocate for this change?

Since much of the information in the mandated subject areas does not change that frequently, it made sense for FCMA to advocate a change in the law. The requirement to re-take the courses every two years takes time and resources away from physicians who prefer to take other CME courses relevant to their clinical practice of medicine. With this change, FCMA estimates the savings in time, travel, and program fees to be between $4,000 and $6,000 for every interval cycle. Over a 30-year career, this translates to a savings of approximately $20,000 to $25,000 for a physician.

Does this mean physicians no longer need to take a minimum of 50 contact hours of CME training every two years?

No, the six-year interval only applies to the mandatory education topics-- risk management, sexual assault, domestic violence, infectious diseases, cultural competency, and behavioral health--not the general requirement to have 50 contact hours of CME within the preceding 24-month period.

When does the new requirement for the behavioral health topic go into effect?

The requirement went into effect on July 1, 2013.

When do physicians need to take the mandated requirement for behavioral health?

It must be taken before they submit their next medical license renewal. For example, if their medical license renews in December, it must be taken before they submit their renewal. After they take the behavior health requirement, they do not have to take that topic again for six years.

What about physicians who need to renew their licenses in July or August of this year—do they have to take the behavioral health topic before they renew?

If physicians renew their licenses in July or August, there is an informal grace period to complete the behavioral health requirement. Unlike the original law and the first amendment that added cultural competency to the list of requirements, this
year's bill did not include a time period in which physicians could take the new mandatory CME course before the requirement took effect. However, in speaking with officials at the Connecticut Department of Health, there is an informal grace period for physicians to complete the behavioral health requirement. The behavioral health course should be completed as soon as possible, particularly for those physicians who have to renew their medical license in the months of July and August.

If physicians already took the five mandated courses—risk management, sexual assault, domestic violence, infectious disease, and cultural competency—when do they need to take these mandated courses again?

Regardless when the five mandated courses were taken, they do not need to be taken again for six years. For example, if physicians last took the mandated topics in 2011, they now do not have to repeat these same topics until 2017.

Do all physicians need to take a course in behavioral health?

Yes, all physicians licensed in the state of Connecticut, regardless of their medical specialty, must fulfill the behavioral health requirement.

Is there a program physicians can attend to meet the newest requirement—behavioral health?

Yes, FCMA is sponsoring a special program on behavioral health that will allow doctors to receive credit for fulfilling the requirement on August 28, 2013, at The Continental Manor in Norwalk, from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Please check FCMA's website at www.fcma.org, under the Calendar tab to register online, fax, or mail.

What if physicians have any additional questions?

They can always contact FCMA at 203-513-2045 or can contact the Connecticut Department of Health, Practitioner Licensing and Investigations Section, 410 Capitol Ave., MS# 12 MQA, P.O. Box 340308, Hartford, CT 06134-0308. Phone: (860) 509-7603, Fax: (860) 707-1984, or email (preferred) oplc.dph@ct.gov