

The Importance of a Well-Written Statement of Need

The statement of need has become increasingly important to the ACCME, and therefore is a critical component of the application process. It should connect the reason why an activity is needed to the supporting needs documentation in order to address a knowledge gap.

For example, let's say the file for an activity that deals with diabetes includes a letter from an expert stating the importance of the topic, along with copies of several recently published articles on the topic, and documentation from the media on the importance of the topic for insurance costs and employee productivity. However, the needs statement merely states that physicians need to improve their care of diabetics and that diabetes is a frequent and important component of their practice and their maintenance of licensure process. In this scenario it is likely that a review by the ACCME would find the needs documents in potential noncompliance as there is no apparent connection between the documents and the statement.

A more robust needs statement would state that diabetes is a commonly seen disease in clinical practice and that experts in the field find that it frequently is inadequately managed [REDACTED]. In addition, published literature demonstrates that there are specific care aspects that are being inadequately managed leading to a high risk of complications and that in fact certain complications like myocardial infarctions are not being reduced because of poor diabetes control [REDACTED]. This poor control is associated with increased costs of care and a negative impact on society [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] that has significant importance for physicians, patients and society.

As you can see from this example, the story of how needs/gaps were determined, documented and connected is an important aspect of being in compliance with ACCME's Criterion 2, and therefore is a critical component of the CME application process.