

New York Establishes Triennial CE Requirements

Editorial Staff

A bill introduced by Senator Michael Nozzolio (R-54th District) will make New York the 49th state to require that doctors of chiropractic complete a specific number of continuing education (CE) hours on an ongoing basis to have their licenses renewed. As we go to press, S 316-B has passed both chambers of the state legislature unanimously and awaits Gov. George Pataki's signature. The bill, which takes effect Jan. 1, 2004 if signed into law, mandates that DCs complete a minimum of 36 hours of continuing education every three years.

"Continuing education will help improve the quality of chiropractic care and allow chiropractors and their patients to take advantage of the newest developments in the field," remarked Sen.

Nozzolio.¹

Currently, New York is one of only two states that does not require ongoing CE classes as part of the relicensure process for doctors of chiropractic. New Jersey has no CE requirements for DCs, while New York requires that DCs take only a one-time, two-hour course in reporting suspected cases of child abuse.²

The new legislation mandates that applicants pass a minimum of 36 hours of "acceptable formal continuing education" every three years, with a maximum of 12 hours of self-instruction approved by the state's Department of Education (DOE), in consultation with the New York Board of Chiropractic Examiners. CE programs must "contain subject matter which contributes to the enhancement of professional and clinical skills of the chiropractor" and be deemed acceptable by an accredited chiropractic college.

Licensees who do not satisfy this requirement will not have their licenses renewed, and will not be allowed to practice unless they agree to make up any deficiencies in continuing education and take any additional classes required by the DOE. Chiropractors who continue to practice without proper certification will be subject to disciplinary action.

Chiropractors who are not actively practicing will be exempt from fulfilling the continuing education requirements during such time; others may need to complete only a prorated portion of CE hours, depending on when their licenses were last renewed. On the other hand, DCs who earn more than the minimum 36 CE credits during any given registration period will not be able to apply excess credits to the next registration period.³

S 316-B was introduced by Sen. Nozzolio in January and referred to the Senate Higher Education Committee, which amended it twice before returning it to the floor for a vote in June. The Senate passed the bill 61-0 on June 19 and delivered it to the Assembly that day, where it was sponsored by Assemblyman Vito Lopez (D-53rd District). Lopez orchestrated a lightning-fast campaign that saw the bill pass through the Assembly 146-0 the day after it was introduced and return to the Senate unamended.

"The profession of chiropractic is an ever-changing one, and the public depends upon chiropractors to be knowledgeable and up-to-date on the latest techniques and developments in the field," emphasized Lopez. "Continuing education will help improve the quality of chiropractic care, raise public confidence in the chiropractic profession, and assure that chiropractors and their patients are able to reap the benefits of the newest developments in the field."⁴

CE requirements for doctors of chiropractic vary dramatically from state to state. According to statistics obtained on the Federation of Chiropractic Licensing Boards (FCLB) Web site (www.fclb.org),² the average number of required CE hours is 17.5 per year, with a low of 10 (Hawaii, which requires a total of 20 hours biennially) and a high of 50 (Illinois and Kansas). Eight states, including Connecticut; Iowa; Maryland; Missouri; North Carolina; and Washington, require a minimum of 24 CE hours per year or 48 CE hours every two years. Some states require additional instruction in areas such as risk management, CPR and AIDS awareness.

References

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3. Text of S316-B. Available on the New York State Senate Web site: www.senate.state.ny.us.
4. Legislative update. Chiropractic continuing education legislation passes. New York State Chiropractic Association press release. Posted online at www.nysca.org June 19, 2003.

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