

NEW CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

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WHAT'S CHANGING ABOUT THE REQUIRED PAIN MANAGEMENT CE? Earlier this year, the Oregon Legislature passed HB 2078, which was then signed into law by Gov. Kate Brown. The bill makes changes to the pain management continuing education (CE) that many Oregon-licensed healthcare practitioners (including dentists) are required to complete, but left the individual licensing boards some leeway in implementing these new requirements. The Oregon Board of Dentistry (OBD) has carefully considered the most “painless” way to assist our licensees in meeting the revised pain management CE requirements. In the past, Oregon-licensed dentists were required to complete one Oregon Health Authority (OHA)-developed, six-hour pain management education training upon initial licensure; those rules are being changed to comply with HB 2078. Effective July 1, 2022, all Oregon-licensed dentists must complete a one-hour pain management training course during every renewal cycle, for as long as the licensee holds an active license.

WHO WILL BE AFFECTED? The change in CE requirements will affect all actively licensed dentists in Oregon, including volunteer dentists, faculty dentists, dentists who are restricted to specialty practice, and dentists who hold active licenses in Oregon but do not currently practice. The requirement applies regardless of whether or not pain management is a part of the dentist's practice. Dental hygienists will not be affected by the change.

WHY DID THE REQUIREMENT CHANGE? The Oregon Pain Management Commission (OPMC) of the OHA was initially created in 2001, when the conversation within Oregon healthcare circles about pain management was drastically different than what we see in the present day and age. Unfortunately, early incarnations of the OPMC's Pain Management Module tended to encourage what healthcare professionals would now consider to be the over-prescription of dangerous, addictive opioids to control even minor, transitory pain. As we are all acutely aware, the nationwide opioid epidemic wreaked havoc in the State of Oregon. According to the Institute of Medicine's 2011 publication “Relieving Pain in America: A Blueprint for Transforming, Prevention, Care, Education, and Research”, Oregon ranked 4th in the nation in inappropriate use of prescription pain killers for adults. As part of their response to the worsening crisis, the OPMC (who are mandated by statute to update their “Pain Management Module” every two years) took action to radically reevaluate their required Pain Management Module course starting in approximately 2016. Throughout 2016-2017, representatives from every Oregon healthcare board, including the OBD, were invited to attend and provide input at a series of sessions focused on “stepping away” from the overuse of dangerous and highly addictive opioids for pain control, and instead introduce “a new understanding of pain and propose a new pathway of treatment for a more holistic approach to the treatment of pain”. The result of all of the hard work done by the OPMC, the OHA, and the healthcare boards is that dentists who took the Pain Management Module prior to the 2016-2017 “revamp” would likely not recognize the course as it exists now! The content has changed drastically and continues to be updated; gone is the influence of the “pill-pushing” ethos of the late 1990s and early 2000s, replaced by information that reflects a new understanding of pain, pain control, and total patient health. Since the course redesign, the OBD has anticipated that the statutory requirement that dentists complete the OPMC Pain Management Module at least once in their careers would eventually be changed to encourage our dental licensees to continue developing their knowledge of pain management, based on the most up-to-date information, throughout their entire careers in Oregon.

The OBD is proud to have been included in the OPMC's Pain Management Module redesign, and fully supports the Legislature, the Governor, the OHA, and the OPMC in our shared goal of ensuring that Oregon-licensed healthcare practitioners are continually provided with the most contemporary and comprehensive pain management education available.

HOW WILL I COMPLETE THE REQUIRED PAIN MANAGEMENT MODULE? The OBD's vision for implementing the revised Pain Management Module CE requirement is to integrate the Pain Management Module into the existing renewal application process itself. A dentist, while completing their renewal through the OBD's new Licensee Portal, would be taken directly to the Pain Management Module on the OPMC website. Once the dentist had successfully completed the Pain Management Module, they would be directed back to the OBD Portal to finish their renewal application. Our system would record the fact that the dentist had completed the required course for that particular renewal. Two years later when the dentist renewed their license again, they would again be directed to the Pain Management Module to complete the most recent version of the course. The OBD believes that integrating the Pain Management Module directly into the renewal process minimizes the likelihood that a dentist may take the wrong course, take the course outside the required timeline, misplace the documentation showing that they completed the required course, or forget to take the course entirely. As you may already be aware, the OBD is currently in the process of deploying a long-awaited new licensing database system. Perhaps you have already accessed our Licensee Portal to complete your renewal or print a new copy of your license! If not, we invite you to learn more about it by navigating to our website oregon.gov/dentistry and clicking “New Licensing System”. This process is ongoing, and new features are being continually developed and deployed. The OBD will work with our database vendor, as well as the OHA, and the OPMC, to realize our vision of integrating the Pain Management Module into the renewal application as explained above. Therefore, if all goes according to plan, aside from new applicants for dental licensure in Oregon, the first group of dentists who will experience the practical effects of the implementation of HB 2078 are dentists with an expiration date of March 31, 2023. The remaining dentists, those with an expiration date of March 31, 2024, will follow suit the following year. If circumstances or implementation plans change, we will certainly notify our licensees and provide clear instructions for complying with the revised requirement. Please remember to keep your contact information up-to-date (as required by ORS 679.120 and 680.075) so you don't miss any important reminders from the OBD!

HOW MUCH DOES THE OPMC'S PAIN MANAGEMENT MODULE COST? The course is provided online, and is available at any time, at no charge.

CAN I TAKE A DIFFERENT PAIN MANAGEMENT COURSE, OTHER THAN THE OPMC'S PAIN MANAGEMENT MODULE? The proposed rule changes related to HB 2078 require completion of “a one-hour pain management course specific to Oregon provided by the Pain Management Commission of the Oregon Health Authority”. Currently, the OPMC's one-hour Pain Management Module is the only course that meets those requirements.

CAN I USE THE OPMC'S PAIN MANAGEMENT MODULE TOWARDS THE 40 TOTAL HOURS OF CE THAT THE OBD REQUIRES DENTISTS TO COMPLETE EACH RENEWAL CYCLE? Yes!