



**Accreditation Council**<sup>™</sup>  
for Continuing Medical Education

*learn well*



**ACCME Strategic Plan  
2018-2021**

**Transforming Education to Improve Health**

## Message from the President and CEO

At ACCME, we are working to drive transformation in the learning environment for practicing clinicians, support our continuing medical education (CME) community, and simplify and align regulatory systems. As we look forward to 2019 and beyond, it is important to reflect on our progress and the strong foundation we can now build on. Our community has much to be proud of:



- A thriving CME system that is an international inspiration and model
- Standards for ensuring independence that create safe spaces for learning
- A diversity of quality educational programming that supports a range of competencies
- A community of CME professionals who are engaged in their own professional self-development
- Strategic collaborations among regulatory stakeholders aimed at advancing educational opportunities and reducing burdens for clinicians, researchers, and educators
- A clinician community that remains committed to continuing professional development

It is important to also acknowledge several persistent challenges, including:

- Clinician burnout and cynicism about regulatory burden and expectations
- Perception among some clinicians that CME is of low value; a focus on acquiring credit rather than learning
- Difficulties securing institutional buy-in and resourcing for CME departments
- A reliance on outmoded models of education by some educators

### OUR MISSION

ACCME's mission is to assure and advance quality learning for healthcare professionals that drives improvements in patient care.

Over the past year, the ACCME Board of Directors and executive leadership, together with our entire staff, engaged in a strategic planning process. To build our vision of the future, we reviewed our trajectory, identified opportunities and challenges, and interviewed stakeholders to gain their insights and perspectives. This strategic plan, comprised of six priority areas, addresses these interconnected opportunities and challenges, and aims to promote an even more dynamic CME enterprise that is well-positioned to adapt to the changing educational needs and expectations of clinician-learners today and in the years to come.

The objectives of this strategic plan are ambitious, but I have no doubt that together with our staff, leadership, colleagues in the CME community, and our stakeholders across the health system, we can realize our shared vision of leveraging education's awesome power to improve the quality of care for the patients and communities we serve.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graham'.

Graham McMahon, MD, MMSc  
President and Chief Executive Officer

## Building on a Strong Foundation

As part of our strategic planning process, we engaged in a review of our recent initiatives and priorities. During the past few years we:

- Implemented new commendation criteria that encourage CME providers to engage in exemplary practices in pedagogy, engagement, evaluation, and change management, and to focus on generating meaningful outcomes
- Collaborated with our colleagues at the American Medical Association (AMA) to align requirements, giving CME providers the freedom and flexibility to employ blended or new educational approaches
- Collaborated with several certifying boards to reduce regulatory burdens and expand opportunities for physicians to participate in CME that counts for Maintenance of Certification and Continuing Certification requirements
- Initiated a pilot program that will enable CME providers to report physician participation in CME directly to the licensing board
- Promoted interprofessional continuing education (IPCE), by expanding Joint Accreditation For Interprofessional Continuing Education™ to include more professions and by initiating an IPCE credit mark and statement.
- Launched an annual meeting to build a community of practice for CME professionals
- Piloted the ACCME Academy, our online learning management system for CME professionals
- Moved our accreditation system online, increasing functionality and flexibility for providers
- Continued to collaborate with government agencies to leverage the capacity of accredited CME to address public health imperatives, such as the opioid crisis
- Increased our engagement with CME and health system leaders around the world

### OUR VISION

ACCME's vision is a world where our community of educators supports clinicians in delivering optimal healthcare for all.

Our investment and engagement in these initiatives has built a strong foundation, enabling us to move forward with additional efforts to fulfill our mission and adapt to the changing needs and environment of clinical practice.

# Strategic Goals

## Strategic Goal 1: AUGMENT Awareness of CME's Value

**Goal** Articulate, promote, and defend the value of accredited CME to professional leadership at all levels of the healthcare delivery system

**Rationale** Leaders at healthcare institutions, professional societies, and other health-related organizations have the capacity to inspire staff and members to engage in professional development, and to imbue their environments with a positive culture of learning that promotes interprofessionalism. It is increasingly important that these leaders support their learners, their educators, and their educational administrators to engage in best practices. We need to encourage leaders to recognize that educational programs can create intellectual fulfillment and restore joy in practice; relieve clinicians of administrative burden through simplification, alignment, and collaboration; create and sustain functional interprofessional teams that learn together and take care of each other; and facilitate meaningful improvements in the quality and safety of patient care. The time is now for healthcare leaders to demonstrate their appreciation of and investment in the value of our educational systems for healthcare professionals.

## Strategic Goal 2: ASSURE Accreditation Quality and Equivalency

**Goal** Continue to monitor accredited CME providers to assure they are compliant with ACCME requirements regarding education quality, independence, and content validity.

**Rationale** Since its founding in 1981, the ACCME has been committed to continuously improving the quality, integrity, and independence of CME. Accreditation standards ensure that CME is designed to be high-quality, effective, independent, free of commercial bias, and based on valid content. The ACCME accreditation system is recognized as a national model by federal and state government agencies, other healthcare accrediting bodies, and the profession of medicine. Our primary priority is to deliver on our commitment to ensure that we and the Recognized Accreditors — as a united system — regulate and accredit appropriately to meet the expectations of the profession and our stakeholders.

## Strategic Goal 3: ACCELERATE the Evolution of CME

**Goal** Promote Accreditation with Commendation Criteria as an important, innovative set of standards that demonstrate how CME can lead to quality improvement by learners in their daily professional activities

**Rationale** Healthcare is evolving continuously, and so must the educational system to support learners' ability to provide optimal care. Increasingly, learners expect their education to be tailored to their needs and their practice environment, and to support them in process and quality improvement. The advancements in educational technology such as adaptive e-learning and simulation create new opportunities to design ever more effective and efficient educational programs. Our commendation criteria are designed to help providers evolve their educational strategy and build their capacity to create longitudinal relationships with learners that meet their needs as individual clinicians, and as members of teams, institutions, and communities.

## Strategic Goal 4: ASSIST CME Educators

**Goal** Identify, publicize, and promote effective practices for developing, implementing and measuring offerings that support learners in delivering high-quality care

**Rationale** The CME community comprises educators and administrators who are developing, implementing, measuring, and sharing effective practices in the development of learning, skills, and attitudes that support the delivery of high-quality care. These professionals and volunteers need their own support system and ability to learn from and with each other, so they can efficiently adopt and implement effective practices.

### OUR PROMISE

*While we live in a time of considerable uncertainty, we will remain grounded by our mission and our values. We will continue to:*

- ✓ *promote the development of high-quality CME that provides immediate and long-term benefits to society*
- ✓ *support the dedication and skill of our CME community*
- ✓ *engage in collaborative leadership efforts with our stakeholders*
- ✓ *facilitate educational scholarship*
- ✓ *fulfill our responsibility to maintain the highest standards of integrity and transparency*
- ✓ *nurture inclusiveness, pluralism, diversity, equality of opportunity, and social justice*

## Strategic Goal 5: ADVANCE Data Systems

**Goal** Continue to develop and promote a data system that supports and is accepted by all involved in developing and implementing continuing professional development (CPD) systems

**Rationale** Data can be meaningful when usefully managed. Given access to their own data, learners can use it to reflect on their learning, and share it with credentialers, certification boards, licensing authorities, and others. Some learners spend an excessive amount of time managing their credit and seek a simple solution to view, track, and control their credits and activities. Such a data system would also support greater engagement in the CPD system, build more self-awareness, help clinicians find and choose activities that fit their specific needs, facilitate self-reflection and the construction of an individualized educational plan, and serve as a

powerful repository for generating and answering research questions.

## Strategic Goal 6: ADVOCATE for CME Scholarship

**Goal** Develop and promote strategies that encourage providers and learners to engage in scholarship and support research that can lead to improved educational programs

**Rationale** To grow and evolve, we need to study, report, and share our experiences. There is substantial opportunity for growth in the area of CME research. We have already embraced research by including it as a component of the commendation criteria, and we seek strategies that will encourage providers to engage in scholarship and sharing, and promote the willingness of clinicians to allow their data to be used for scholarly pursuits. As activity-based educational research has become more established, there is particular opportunity to develop systems and approaches for improving educational programs.