Identifying Educational Gaps

Needs assessment is the systematic process of gathering information and using it to determine instructional solutions to close the gap between.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Gap</th>
<th>Optimal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What learners know &amp; do</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>What learners should know &amp; do</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Identification and analysis of CME needs provide the basis for developing educational objectives. The planning committee should ask the following questions:

- How prevalent is the need among the target audience?
- How many different assessment sources indicated this need?
- How significantly will the unfulfilled need hinder health care delivery?
- How directly is the need related to actual physician performance?
- How likely is it that a CME activity will improve practice behavior?
- How likely is it that a CME activity will improve practice behavior?
- Are sufficient resources available to effectively address this topic?
- How receptive will the target audience be to a session on this topic?

Types of needs assessment to submit with application

**Inferred needs** which may be derived from the following:
- New methods of diagnosis or treatment
- Availability of new medication(s) or indication(s)
- Development of new technology
- Input from experts regarding advances in medical knowledge
- Acquisition of new facilities or equipment
- Legislative, regulatory, or organizational changes effecting patient care

**Verbalized needs and interests** which may be derived from the following:
- Requests submitted on participants’ activity evaluation forms
- Formal surveys of potential participants (mail and Internet-based)
- Informal comments
- Patient problem inventories compiled by potential participants
- Consensus of faculty members within a department or service area

**Proven needs** which are based on objective external data sources. These needs may be derived from the following:
- Epidemiological data
- Quality assurance/audit data
- Re-credential review
- Morbidity/Mortality
- Statistics Infection control data
- Surgical procedures statistics
- Professional society requirements
- Journal articles/literature citations
- News media