

OSMA PARTICIPATES IN PILOT EDUCATIONAL GRANT PROGRAM

The Oklahoma State Medical Association (OSMA) is participating in a precedent setting, pilot program to assist OSMA continuing medical education programs meet the challenges that they face. OSMA and four other states including Georgia, Colorado, Massachusetts and Florida have awarded and will be distributing a block grant from a pharmaceutical company. The OSMA will award educational grants to OSMA accredited organizations that plan evidence based, outcomes oriented education.

Accredited providers in Oklahoma face two major challenges. First, pharmaceutical grant monies to support education have significantly declined. The second challenge is a philosophical shift in planning of physician education. The public, the medical profession and funding sources are demanding that physician continuing education do more than raise the "happiness index" of doctors. Specifically, education should be evidence-based and actually make a difference in the way that medicine is practiced by changing physician practice behavior and improving patient care. CME Providers that are accredited by the Oklahoma State Medical Association who planned education using this planning paradigm were eligible for the educational grants. OSMA's participation in the block grant program allows the OSMA to assist its providers in funding their CME programs and rewards them for assessing a higher level of outcomes of education.

The criteria for qualifying for the grant, was discussed with attendees at the Oklahoma Alliance for Continuing Medical Education (OkACME) Conference held on October 26, 2006. The OSMA accredits 22 organizations in the state which offer *AMA PRA category 1 credits*[™] to physicians. All OSMA accredited providers were eligible to apply for the grant.

The block grant project focused on the area of mental health, specifically depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Each project stressed an emphasis on outcomes measurement, as outlined at the OkACME Conference. Each applicant was encouraged to think about innovative CME programs which might consist of collaboration with other CME Providers and must reach level 3 or level 4 outcomes as outlined by Carol Havens, MD, California.

Grant applications were submitted on December 11, 2006 and reviewed by the OSMA Application Review Committee of the OSMA on January 5, 2007. Applications approved by the OSMA Application Review Committee include these CME providers: Muskogee Regional Medical Center, Collaboration with Integris Baptist Medical Center/Oklahoma Foundation for Medical Quality, St. Anthony Hospital, St. Francis Health System, St. Mary's Regional Medical Center and Tulsa County Medical Society. The total amount received by the seven participating OSMA CME Providers was \$90,074. This was the highest amount received by any one state within the five participating states. The OSMA will continue its efforts and participation in block grant projects that encourage a higher level of outcomes education which assist in providing funding for CME activities provided by OSMA CME providers.

The relationship between educators and the pharmaceutical industry is shifting. State medical societies that recognize and respond to the changing environment will be better able to serve the educational needs of the physicians of their state. Ultimately the care delivered to patients will be impacted positively by this new outcomes-based physician education.