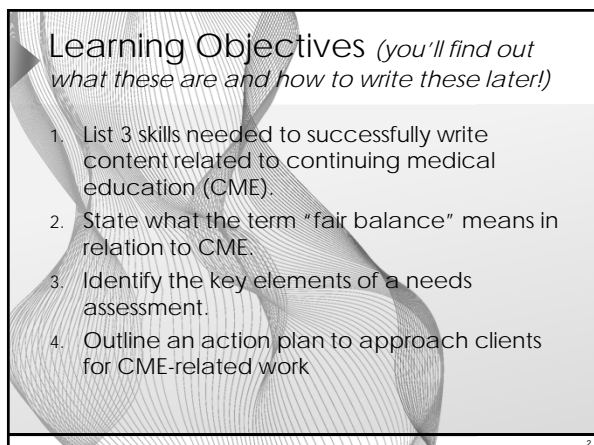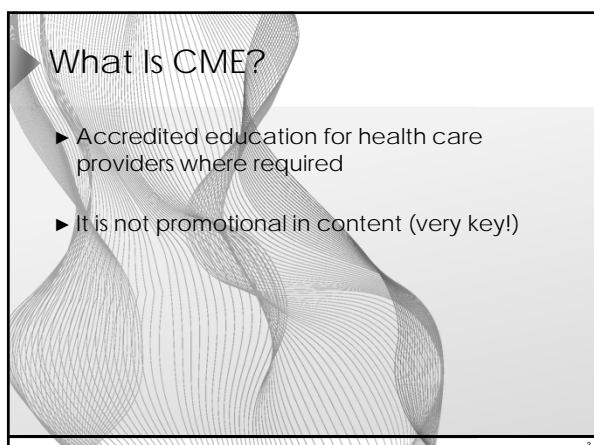# Continuing Medical Education (CME) 101

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Learning Objectives *(you'll find out what these are and how to write these later!)*

1. List 3 skills needed to successfully write content related to continuing medical education (CME).
2. State what the term "fair balance" means in relation to CME.
3. Identify the key elements of a needs assessment.
4. Outline an action plan to approach clients for CME-related work

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What Is CME?

► Accredited education for health care providers where required

► It is not promotional in content (very key!)

1

Goals of CE/CME

► To address an unmet educational need and to help healthcare providers maintain competence and increase knowledge
  – Is there a gap in knowledge related to clinical practice?
  – Are there new agents for a particular disease state that education is needed for?
  – Are there new and emerging developments that healthcare providers need to know about?

4

Who Provides CE/CME?

► Medical education companies
► Hospitals
► Academic centers
► Non-profit medical societies
► CE/CME is only through accredited-providers (eg, ACCME, ACPE, or ANCC)*

*Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education, Accreditation Council for Pharmaceutical Education, or American Nurses Credentialing Center

5

CME/CE Activities versus Programs

► Activities refer to what is delivered to the learner

► Programs are what the accredited-provider, such as the university or medical communications company, have in place

► Learners don't attend programs, they attend activities

6

2

Types of CE/CME Activities

- ► Written formats (review articles, manuscripts, roundtable transcripts, faculty Q&A)

- ► Online modules (interactive case discussions, articles, branched learning)

- ► Live activities (grand rounds, faculty Q&A, quiz bowls, interactive formats)

7

CME/CE: The Team

- ► Grant writer

- ► Medical/scientific director

- ► Medical writer

- ► Expert faculty

- ► Peer reviewer

8

Skills Needed to Do Work in CME/CE

- ► Proficiency in literature searching and evaluation

- ► Understanding of basic principles and accreditation standards for CME and CE

- ► (Comfort with interacting with expert faculty)

- ► Knowing some terminology specific to CME/CE

- ► Understanding Bloom's Taxonomy

9

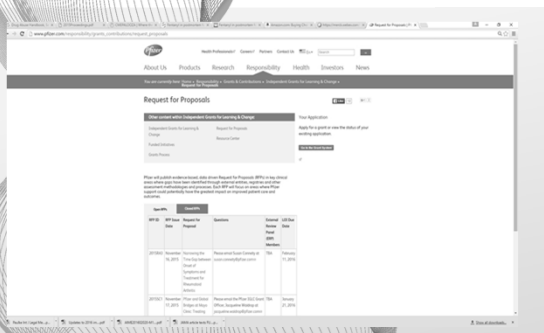## The Development of a CME/CE Activity

► It starts with a grant proposal via "request for proposal" or an unsolicited grant proposal

► Contents of a grant proposal

– This will vary but a key element is the "needs assessment"

Request for Proposals (RFPs)

RFP: Eligibility

II. Eligibility

Geographic Scope:	☑ United States Only ☐ International(specify country/countries)_____
Applicant Eligibility Criteria:	The following may apply: medical, dental, nursing, allied health, and/or pharmacy professional schools; healthcare institutions (both large and small); professional associations; government agencies; and other entities with a mission related to healthcare improvement. More information on organizations eligible to apply directly for a grant can be found at http://www.pfizer.com/files/IGLC_OrganizationEligibility_effJuly2015.pdf. Collaborations within institutions (e.g., between departments and/or inter-professional), as well as between different institutions/organizations/associations, are encouraged. Please note all partners must have a relevant role and the requesting organization must have a key role in the project. For programs offering credit, the requesting organization must be the accredited provider.

Fair Balance

- No commercial bias
- Of course need to have the grantor's product mentioned in the activity! But objective data only
- Use generic names
- Commercial supporters cannot influence content of the activity
- Describe benefits and adverse effects of each drug objectively
- Leave out promotional wording

13

Needs Assessments: What Are They?

- The format of a needs assessment may vary: does your client have a template? Or do you have a template of your own?

- The purpose of this section of a grant proposal is to identify "gaps in knowledge" and tie it to your target audience's educational needs with supporting evidence

14

Needs Assessments: Key Elements

- Overview/Executive summary
- Educational gap analysis
- Learning objectives
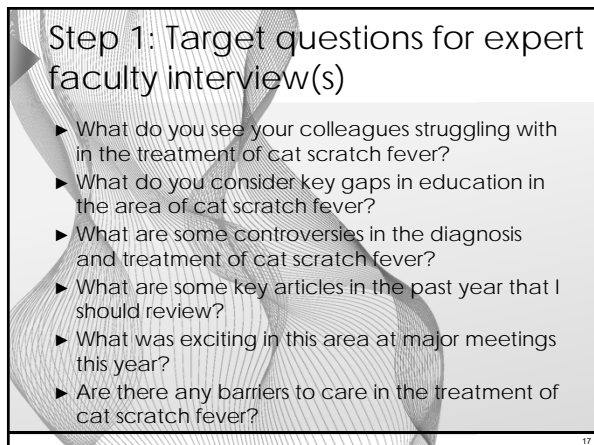- Proposed faculty list (medical writer may not be asked to do this)
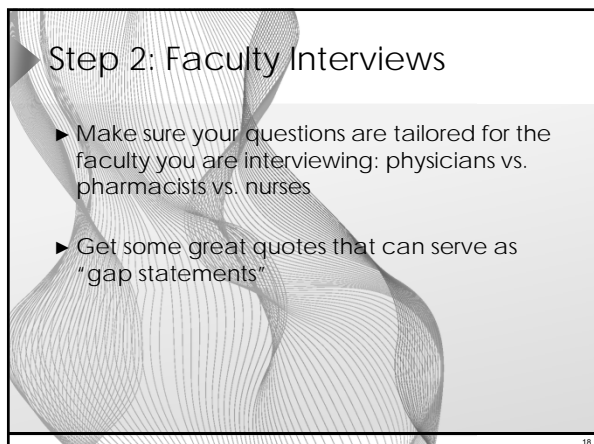- References
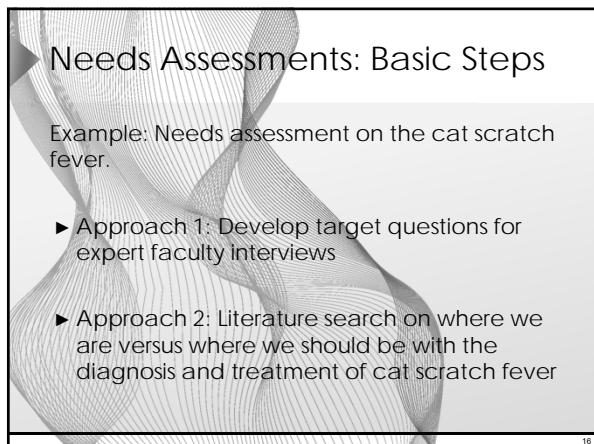
15

Needs Assessments: Basic Steps

Example: Needs assessment on the cat scratch fever.

► Approach 1: Develop target questions for expert faculty interviews

► Approach 2: Literature search on where we are versus where we should be with the diagnosis and treatment of cat scratch fever
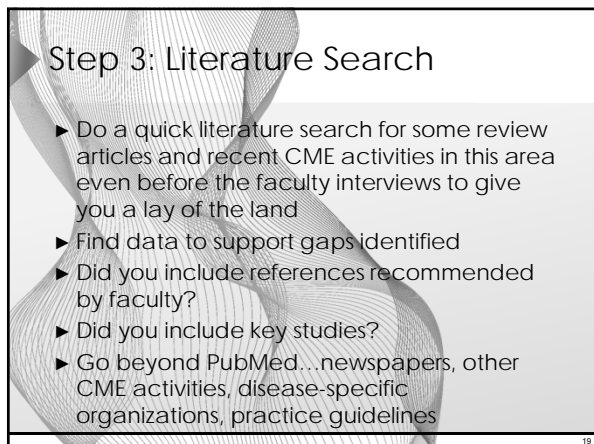
16

Step 1: Target questions for expert faculty interview(s)

► What do you see your colleagues struggling with in the treatment of cat scratch fever?
► What do you consider key gaps in education in the area of cat scratch fever?
► What are some controversies in the diagnosis and treatment of cat scratch fever?
► What are some key articles in the past year that I should review?
► What was exciting in this area at major meetings this year?
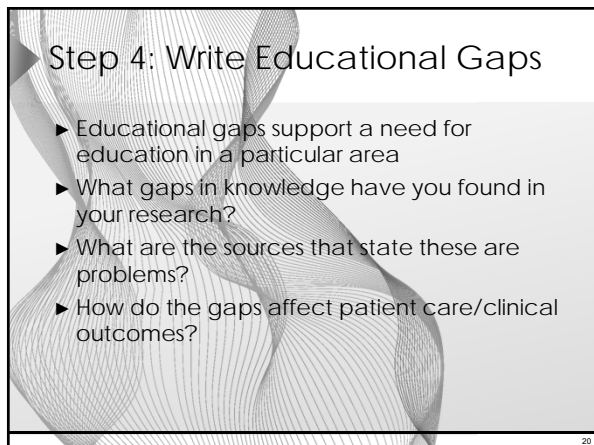► Are there any barriers to care in the treatment of cat scratch fever?

17

Step 2: Faculty Interviews

► Make sure your questions are tailored for the faculty you are interviewing: physicians vs. pharmacists vs. nurses

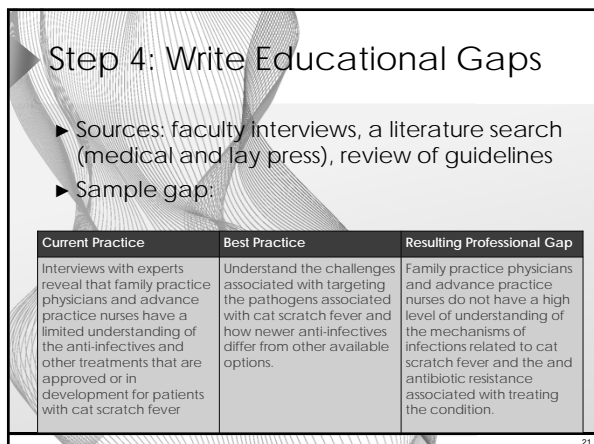► Get some great quotes that can serve as "gap statements"

18

Step 3: Literature Search

- Do a quick literature search for some review articles and recent CME activities in this area even before the faculty interviews to give you a lay of the land
- Find data to support gaps identified
- Did you include references recommended by faculty?
- Did you include key studies?
- Go beyond PubMed…newspapers, other CME activities, disease-specific organizations, practice guidelines

19

Step 4: Write Educational Gaps

- Educational gaps support a need for education in a particular area
- What gaps in knowledge have you found in your research?
- What are the sources that state these are problems?
- How do the gaps affect patient care/clinical outcomes?

20

Step 4: Write Educational Gaps

- Sources: faculty interviews, a literature search (medical and lay press), review of guidelines
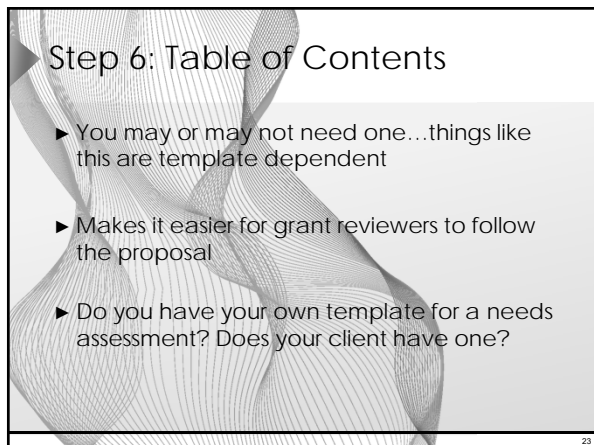- Sample gap:

Current Practice	Best Practice	Resulting Professional Gap
Interviews with experts reveal that family practice physicians and advance practice nurses have a limited understanding of the anti-infectives and other treatments that are approved or in development for patients with cat scratch fever	Understand the challenges associated with targeting the pathogens associated with cat scratch fever and how newer anti-infectives differ from other available options.	Family practice physicians and advance practice nurses do not have a high level of understanding of the mechanisms of infections related to cat scratch fever and the and antibiotic resistance associated with treating the condition.

21

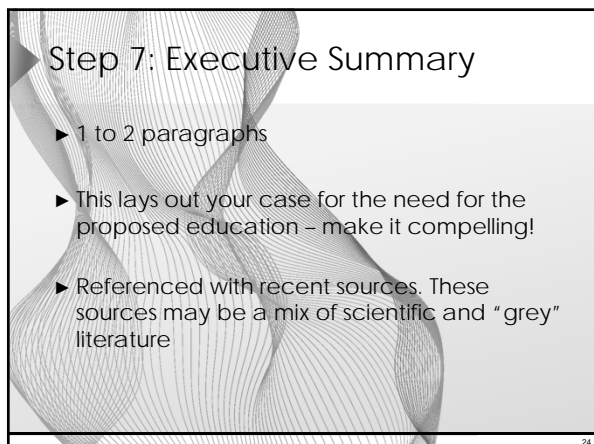## Step 5: Brief Content Summary

► Keep it short. 2 to 3 sentences

Step 6: Table of Contents

► You may or may not need one…things like this are template dependent

► Makes it easier for grant reviewers to follow the proposal

► Do you have your own template for a needs assessment? Does your client have one?

Step 7: Executive Summary

► 1 to 2 paragraphs

► This lays out your case for the need for the proposed education – make it compelling!

► Referenced with recent sources. These sources may be a mix of scientific and "grey" literature

Step 8: Learning Objectives

► These must align with the educational gaps
► At least 3 per CE/CME credit
► Use "action" verbs (especially for knowledge-based activities).
  – Can the learning objectives *be measured*?
    • "Cite 3 symptoms of cat scratch fever"
    • "Be familiar with the symptoms of cat scratch fever"
    • "Understand the treatments for cat scratch fever"
    • "Learn the treatments for cat scratch fever in children"
    • "Know the anti-infectives used for treating cat scratch fever"

25

Learning Objectives and Bloom's Taxonomy

► Action verbs correspond to the levels in the "cognitive domain" of Bloom's Taxonomy.
► The levels range from knowledge to competence/performance/action:
  – Knowledge (define)
  – Comprehension (explain)
  – Application (apply)
  – Analysis (distinguish)
  – Synthesis (design)
  – Evaluation (evaluate)

26

Learning Objectives and Bloom's Taxonomy

	Level	Examples of Verbs to Use
Knowledge-based	Knowledge	Define, list, state, identify, name, cite, compare
	Comprehension	Summarize, paraphrase, give example, outline, explain
Competence/ performance/ action-based	Application	Translate, illustrate, demonstrate
	Analysis	Distinguish, differentiate, question, relate
	Synthesis	Design, develop, formulate, create, organize
	Evaluation	Evaluate, assess, measure, rate, select

27

9

Step 9: Wrapping Up the Needs Assessment

- ► Length of a needs assessment: 5-7 double-spaced pages including references

- ► Tables for grantor to quickly reference information may be included

- ► The content should grab the reader's attention and be compelling

- ► Make sure the learning objectives match your educational gaps

28

Step 10: Proposed List of Faculty

- ► Your faculty interviewees are likely your chairpersons

- ► List proposed faculty and their institutions
  - – Did they do CME in this area recently?
  - – Who presented abstracts on your topic at a recent symposium?
  - – For live activities, how do they sound (any online videos of them?)

29

The Grant is Submitted…and Approved! Now What?

- ► On to content development…

- ► Learning objectives and content of the activity cannot be changed from what was submitted in the grant

- ► The grantor is not involved in content development. This is not promotional education

30

Content Development

- ► Fair balance (but make sure you mention the grantor's product – don't go the opposite direction!)
- ► Scientific rigor
- ► Cite references where needed (like any other medical writing piece)
- ► Make sure the learning objectives are all addressed
- ► Does the client want annotated references (like any other medical writing piece)

31

Tips on Some of the Formats for CE/CME: Slide Decks

- ► Less is more. No more than 5 lines per slide and 5 words per line.

- ► Graphics must be meaningful and easy to read

- ► Include references on each slide

32

Tips on Some of the Formats for CE/CME: Print

- ► Journal guidelines?

- ► Word count?

33

Post-Test Questions

► These must relate to the learning objectives

► These provide "outcome" data

► Avoid true/false (make them somewhat rigorous)

► Is the grantor's product mentioned in any of them? (keeping with fair balance though)

34

Finding CME/CE Clients

► The Alliance for Continuing Education in the Health Professions ("The Alliance"
  – Annual meeting
  – Member directory
  – Courses (Basics Course)
  – Types of members: medical education companies (MECs), medical societies, hospitals, medical writers
► Client base: MECs and medical societies. Sometimes hospitals will have outside writers do their needs assessments.

35

Sample Activity for Physicians (front matter)

36

Sample Activity for Physicians (front matter)

Next session: CME/CE 201

► Putting together a mock needs assessment

– Sources for needs assessment data

– Performing a gap analysis: identifying practice gaps and associating need for education

– Writing learning objectives