



Physicians' Institute

for EXCELLENCE IN MEDICINE
Improving medical practice for physicians and their patients

About the Physicians' Institute and the Collaborative Grants Model™

The Physicians' Institute (a nonprofit subsidiary of the Medical Association of Georgia) has become a national leader in developing and managing collaborative educational projects that provide managed educational grants to state medical society-accredited continuing medical education (CME) providers, with a focus on outcomes-based and performance improvement (PI)-based CME activities. The Physicians' Institute currently has collaborative relationships with sixteen state organizations, representing **861** state medical society-accredited local CME providers. These states include:

- Alabama
- Arizona
- California
- Colorado
- Florida
- Georgia
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Kentucky
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- North Carolina
- Oklahoma
- Pennsylvania
- South Carolina
- Virginia

These collaborations give the Physicians' Institute tremendous reach into locally-provided CME based on locally identified professional practice gaps in community hospitals, health systems, and state chapters of specialty societies. If it is true that "all CME is local," then this collaborative model is ideal for CME.

The Physicians' Institute defines itself as a PI organization for state medical society-accredited CME providers. In addition to direct grant support, the Physicians' Institute provides grantees an array of support services and resources including needs assessment data, training in outcomes and PI techniques, educational design consultation, and the required use of specific outcomes evaluation services. Grants are awarded through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process involving the state medical society collaborating organizations, which recommend grant requests for funding, with final approval made by a grants award committee of the Physicians' Institute. Collaborative Organization review committees are primarily made up of physicians.

The overall aim of the Physicians' Institute's collaborative grants system is to improve the quality and impact of local CME. Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) annual reports consistently show that less than 4% of industry funding goes to state medical society accredited providers, even though they represent twice the number of organizations directly accredited by the ACCME. The Collaborative Grants Model™ was developed to rectify this situation by providing opportunities for increased funding, educational design consultation, sophisticated evaluation of activity outcomes, and tools for innovative educational strategies.

To date, the Physicians' Institute has developed and managed six distinct Collaborative Grants initiatives with 146 grant-funded projects, which have included thirteen State organizations with focuses on depression and anxiety; cardiovascular risk factors, diabetes performance improvement, tobacco cessation,

and CME-Performance Improvement training. Each grantee provides their own CME credit to local participants. The Collaborative Grants Model™ has been:

- Vetted and approved by the ACCME;
- Awarded the “Member Sections Great Idea Award” (2009) by the Alliance for CME; and
- Awarded the “Best Collaboration Award” by the ACME.

Each initiative is conducted through a phased approach, which can be summarized as follows:

- Phase 1: Physicians’ Institute coordinates the development of resource materials, evaluation structure, the announcement and Request for Proposal (RFP).
- Phase 2: Physicians’ Institute announces initiative and requests collaborative organizations to provide information to 900 state medical society accredited providers. Webinars and one onsite training session are held focusing on outcomes analysis and performance improvement skills. Interested organizations submit applications.
- Phase 3: Review of applications include an initial analysis by the Collaborative Organizations’s review committee followed by review by the Physicians’ Institute Committee. Grantees are announced.
- Phase 4: Grantees sign LOAs, receive evaluation instructions and resources, and are sent 75% of grant.
- Phase 5: Projects are executed with continuous oversight by a Project Manager. Grantees submit evaluation data to evaluation vendor.
- Phase 6: Grantees submit structured final report, abstract, and budget reconciliation.

The Physicians’ Institute provides the following resources and structure to grantees to conduct their projects:

1. **CME Provider Training:** A combination of webinars and live presentations, supplemented by website content, informs the collaborating organizations and the interested accredited CME providers of the availability of the grants and the requirements for applying and explaining how to conduct outcomes evaluation.
2. **Resources and Content:** Grantees will receive access to online resources, videos, and experts, ARS systems, depending on the initiative.
3. **Types of Grants**
Grant-funded activities will be based upon the demonstration of a local professional practice gap that matches or augments the overall demonstrated need expressed in this proposal. All activities must contain an outcomes evaluation component that incorporates a pre- and post-activity evaluation. Grantees will be encouraged to utilize the guidelines and resources provided, offer multiple learning activities to meet stated objectives in order to close a locally identified healthcare performance/quality gap, and to be creative in their approach to CME activities. The types of grants vary based on an array of characteristics that support *Competence*, continue with additional characteristics that support *Performance*, and culminate with *Applied Learning in Practice* that demonstrates improvement in outcomes.
4. **Evaluation Services:** Each grantee will be supported by the provision of evaluation services in developing and conducting both activity and follow-up outcome evaluations that includes every participant. A data collection and reporting system is used by all grantees to facilitate individual project outcomes and to provide aggregated data for all projects. The grants will support the use of audience response systems for those grantees that do not already have this resource available. The ARS technology will form a core part of the overall evaluation strategy.

The Collaborative Grants Model™

