Keeping up with Blood: introducing our CME program

In this issue of Blood, we are pleased to introduce a new Continuing Medical Education (CME) feature, appearing monthly. For many years ASH has provided CME credits for the annual meeting and other educational meetings sponsored by the society. In surveying society members, more CME activities has been a frequent request. To this end, the Society and Blood explored offering CME credits for selected clinical studies published in the journal. Two approaches were considered. Blood could develop and support its own CME division, and although this option would have the advantage of complete independence, the administrative burden and expense was prohibitive, as all readers involved in CME administration and oversight at their institutions are well aware. Some medical journals that have chosen this option charge readers directly for CME credits, which we did not feel was in the spirit of a society-owned journal. The second option was to partner with an existing CME organization. These organizations have considerable expertise in the complex rules covering CME, and the experience needed to produce high-quality and useful educational materials. These 2 points seem straightforward but are actually extremely involved. The regulations governing physician CME vary by state and are rapidly becoming ever more stringent. Equally, as anyone who has written review questions can attest, developing clear questions that emphasize the major teaching points is not easy. It requires considerable experience and training to produce unambiguous questions and answers, and neither authors of clinical papers in Blood nor our editors are likely to be able to produce valid questions.

However, before committing to this option, the Society and Blood wanted to avoid even the slightest appearance of influence by the pharmaceutical industry in the processes of selecting articles for CME credit or the writing of questions. After careful review, the ASH Journals Committee concluded that the Medscape JournalCME program met these high standards. This program is entirely funded by MedscapeCME, at no cost to the Journal. There is no external support for any JournalCME activities. Articles will be selected by the Blood editorial staff, Blood editors and the primary authors of selected papers will review and approve questions and answers, drafted by MedscapeCME professionals, before posting. CME information will be included in the print version of the article, and will be accessible via the Blood Web site (at http://bloodjournal.hematologylibrary.org) as well as via the Medscape Web site on a dedicated Blood JournalCME page (MedscapeCME.com/blood) with no pharmaceutical advertisements. The selected articles will also be highlighted on multiple specialty Web pages, which should both increase the visibility of Blood and provide rapid and easy access to key new findings in hematology to specialists working in other areas of medicine. The program will be free to participants, including tracking of CME credits. We welcome constructive feedback about this new program from our readers as this new initiative moves forward.

This activity should also expand Blood’s and ASH’s Web presence. Information technology is continuing to evolve. ASH and Blood are committed to providing scientific, clinical, and educational information in a format that will best serve the needs of our members. This CME activity is just another example of activities and services that are expanding to meet the needs of our membership. We look forward to continuing these efforts.

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Keeping up with *Blood*: introducing our CME program

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