



Continuing Competency — A Colorado Approach

Most consumers already assume that when a professional is re-licensed they are fully competent to do their job. For the most part, their assumption is correct. However, with today's fast-paced, technology-driven world, it is necessary for professionals to continually update their skills and knowledge in the field. Relying solely on on-the-job experience is not always sufficient. DORA seeks a new approach to ensuring competency among professions and is committed to working with those professions that voluntarily seek legislative approval for the development of a Continuing Competency program.

Continuing Competency is a movement that requires professionals to demonstrate their competency in their field, usually by means of assessment against a standard, ranging from an initial self assessment, to a peer review, or even published articles in a recognized journal. Currently in many areas, we rely solely on continuing education requirements, which allow the professional to attain further knowledge via classroom work, but the number of hours sitting in the classroom does not accurately show that the professional is competent in terms of changing professional practices and modified job requirements.

DORA's goal in instituting any Continuing Competency program is to develop a system that protects Colorado consumers, fits our types of practices and our regulatory environment, and supports Colorado's professional culture.

We stand committed to the following principles as professions move forward with the development of Continuing Competency programs:

- There should be collaboration. A broad collaboration of stakeholders is necessary to develop effective programs. This must include licensing, accreditation and certification entities as well as associations, societies and other interested parties.
- One size does not fit all. We believe that different professionals will require different models/approaches.
- The purpose is to assure public safety and improve the lifelong learning of professionals, not catch "bad apples."
- It is the professional's responsibility and benefit. Any continuing competency program should be designed as a positive development in the professional's career, not as an unwarranted intrusion or punitive burden.
- Continuing Education, while not necessarily sufficient by itself to ensure Continuing Competence, may be a necessary component.
- The final responsibility to develop initiatives that work for each profession should reside with the licensing board or entity responsible for licensure.
- Any system should address the knowledge, skills, attitudes, judgment, abilities, experience, and ethics necessary for safe and competent practice in the setting and role of an individual's practice at the time of renewal.
- Any system must take into account existing professional development programs administered by voluntary credentialing and specialty boards or by hospitals or other employers, when the private programs meet Board-established standards.



DORA's Proposed Implementation Steps for Professions Seeking Legislation

- Identify partners to solicit feedback and support this initiative.
- Develop a plan for implementation.
- Seek authority from the Legislature for each professional Board to develop a Continuing Competency model that fits its profession. (We would propose there be no firm date by which each Board has to complete its work, but a commitment to the principles above).
- Upon passage of legislation, work closely with other affected groups on the development of a database model that can be used by all occupations.
- Each Board would have to work individually on the elements of what an effective Continuing Competency system would look like for the members they regulate.