COPE ACHIEVES SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVANCY WITH ACCME

Charlotte, NC – The Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE®) CE accreditation system has been deemed Substantially Equivalent to the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME®) CME accreditation system. To achieve this status, COPE submitted to an extensive, voluntary, review process and was deemed substantially equivalent to the ACCME’s accreditation requirements, criteria, policies, and decision-making process. The process also included an accreditation interview and verification of the successful implementation of the COPE provider accreditation program.

CE/CME Accreditors are considered substantially equivalent by the ACCME if they support CE/CME that: enhances physician performance; is based on data describing physicians’ educational needs; has effectiveness assessed as it relates to physician performance or health status improvements; and is developed with the control of the content, quality and scientific integrity being the responsibility of the CE/CME provider.

To meet the needs of a continuously changing environment, COPE has adapted over time to be consistent with the CE/CME accreditation community. In 2010, COPE implemented Standards for Commercial Support (SCS) and later adopted the ACCME SCS aligning with other healthcare professions. Uniformity in the principles and outcomes of accredited CE/CME is valuable and physician learners are assured their educational programs meet consistent and high standards regardless of profession.

COPE has historically accredited individual CE activities. In January, an option was introduced for accreditation of CE providers, thus allowing greater freedom and flexibility. “We’ve modernized the COPE accreditation system to align with other health professions. CE/CME is no longer simply about getting hours because you need them for license renewal. Research shows that CE/CME is most effective when it’s based upon practice-based needs assessment and focused on outcomes. With these changes, we’re able to demonstrate that COPE accredited CE has positive effects on optometrists’ knowledge, performance, and patient outcomes,” says Dr. James Campbell, COPE Committee Chair.

Dr. Richard Orgain, ARBO President, commented, “We’re very excited that COPE has achieved substantial equivalency with ACCME. With healthcare moving towards a team-based approach, CE/CME now often requires collaborative education efforts. With COPE’s accreditation process
recognized as equivalent to the other healthcare professions, the door is open for optometrists to participate in interprofessional continuing education.”

COPE was established in 1993 to accredit continuing education on behalf of optometric licensing boards for the public welfare. Over 52,000 activities have been accredited since the inception of the program. ARBO is a non-profit organization based in Charlotte, North Carolina, and serves 66 regulatory agencies in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. For more information on ARBO, please contact Lisa Fennell, ARBO Executive Director, 200 South College Street, Suite 2030, Charlotte, NC 28202 ph: (704) 970-2710 or e-mail: lfennell@arbo.org.