

The Supreme Court of Ohio

March 17, 2020

Ohio Judges and Attorneys,

The Commission on Continuing Legal Education has been receiving inquiries related to continuing legal education and the Coronavirus COVID-19. Specifically, we are being asked whether or not there will be a waiver of the twelve-hour cap on self-study programs in light of live program cancelations. The Commission on Continuing Legal Education is not recommending a waiver of the self-study cap at this time. The CLE deadline for attorneys whose last names start M-Z is not until December 31, 2020 and for attorneys whose last name starts with A-L it is not until December 31, 2021. In addition, the Supreme Court of Ohio approved a new program type in July 2019 called “live interactive webinar” and although activities that have been approved in Ohio as “live interactive webinars” are self-study, they do not count towards the 12-hour cap, and can be used to fulfill up to 24 hours of the CLE requirements.

It is easy to search for these approved live interactive webinar courses through our website. Please go to <http://sc.ohio.gov/AttySvcs/CLE/ActivitySearch/> to conduct a search and under activity type, choose “live interactive webinar.” As of March 15, 2020, there were approximately 50 approved “live interactive webinars” occurring during the month of March 2020 and 166 approved “live interactive webinars” through December 2020. Judges, magistrates and acting judges can search for Judicial College live interactive webinar courses at OhioCourtEDU. Many of the sponsors of live CLE programs have changed the formats of their cancelled seminars to either general self-study or live-interactive webinars. The Commission on Continuing Legal Education has waived the sponsors’ application fees for these seminars, and to speed up approval, has agreed to accept their submissions on-line. Programs are being approved and added to the website daily.

The Rules Governing the Bar of Ohio also provide that an attorney who, because of a permanent physical disability, or other compelling reason, has difficulty attending programs or activities may seek approval to do all their CLE by self-study by filing an Application for Substitute Program. Please note that based upon the CLE deadlines outlined above, the Commission will not approve applications based solely on the cancelation of live seminars, except consideration may be given on a case-by-case basis for attorneys and judges currently in late-compliance, and for those attorneys with an autoimmune disorder.

Before filing for a substitute exemption, an attorney in late compliance must first attempt to attend live interactive courses to meet the requirement. Only if unsuccessful, will the CLE Commission consider the request for substitute program and the application must contain a detailed explanation of efforts made to attend live interactive webinars and why they were unsuccessful. The application for substitute program can be found on the court’s website or <http://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/AttySvcs/CLE/forms/Form9d.pdf>.

The Commission on Continuing Legal Education understands that this is an evolving situation and assures you they will continue to monitor and review the rules and policies surrounding continuing legal education in Ohio, including at their next meeting on May 8, 2020.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation during this difficult time,

Sky Pettey, Chair
Commission on Continuing Legal Education

Gina White Palmer, Director, Attorney Services Division, the Supreme Court of Ohio &
Secretary to the Commission on Continuing Legal Education