GUIDELINES FOR HOSTING A REGIONAL MEETING

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The Association for Child Neurology Nurses (ACNN) supports educational opportunities for its members. Regional conferences offer a local means of providing educational opportunities and foster collegiality and networking within defined geographic areas. The following guide was developed to aid ACNN members in developing a regional meeting.

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SECTION 1
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Establish planning committee 6-12 months before conference:
1. Determine the minimum number needed for committee (Should have at least 3 members).
2. Include an odd number of members to avoid tie votes.
3. Add individuals with CEU, program planning, and budget experience.
4. Identify a chairperson and secretary (one who will be taking notes at each meeting – this task can rotate).
5. Define each member’s responsibilities (i.e., individuals responsible for registration, brochures, sponsorship, etc.).
6. Develop clear guideline for completion of activities (see Template for Program Timelines at the end of this packet – timelines may vary depending on situation).
7. Contact your organization to see if a program planner is available to help.
8. Check with the organization that will be granting the CEU’s/Contact Hours to ensure there are no specific committee requirements.

SECTION 2
LOCATION OF CONFERENCE

The following considerations should be explored when choosing a conference location:
1. Survey local members (survey monkey - available from ACNN for member use, local requests, areas of interest, new programs) to gain feedback on preferred location.
2. Decide how often the conference will be presented. This may help with location selection.
3. If encompassing a large region, consider delineating a rotating schedule on an annual or semiannual basis.
4. A centralized location may work the best.
5. Consider ease of transportation to the area, availability of appropriate facilities (availability of teleconferencing), and parking.
6. Determine the most appropriate type of facility.
   a. Hospital – if they sponsor it may help to defray some costs
   b. Hotel/conference center - consider significant expenses associated with this option
7. Consider space requirements - estimated numbers, space for meals, space for exhibitors.
SECTION 3
ACNN SPONSORSHIP AND ENDORSEMENT

1. All ACNN sponsored and/or endorsed events require:
   a. Approval of conference content
   b. Use of ACNN name and logo on brochure and other materials
   c. Submission of budget to ACNN Office. Only if you are applying for a Regional Meeting Grant
   d. Availability of ACNN brochure/information sheet at conference to attract new members
   e. Final summary report when conference completed to include:
      i. Conference attendance, evaluations
      ii. Financial information re: revenues and expenses if funds from ACNN used
      iii. List of attendees with physical and email addresses

2. For approved events, the following are available but not required:
   a. ACNN banner
   b. Updated mailing list- ability to email blast members for save the date, send brochure
   c. Support of designated member(s) of Board of Directors.

3. Apply for an ACNN Regional Meeting Grant (optional)
   a. Complete the ACNN Regional Meeting Grant. Click on this link.
   b. Grant application should be submitted no later than _____ prior to the meeting.
   c. _____ will review grant applications ________.

SECTION 4
PROGRAM PLANNING

1. Complete a learning needs assessment to determine conference content and potential topics. This can be conducted via various methods – survey of potential audience members eliciting learning needs and desires, literature search for recent updates on relevant topics, experience with learning deficits in various settings, etc.
2. Determine length of conference (half day, full day, etc.) and ideal day of the week.
3. Determine if there will be invited speakers, abstract presenters or both. Will you have a keynote speaker?
   a. Develop list of potential regional and national speakers.
   b. National speakers often need to be invited at least one year in advance.
   c. If you are asking national speaker – could have them come the day before for grand rounds, additional speaking engagements.
4. Questions to consider:
   a. What audience level do you want to reach (new to child neurology vs. experienced, APN vs. RN)?
   b. Do you want a theme (e.g., Epilepsy vs. a mix of topics)?
   c. Is there available faculty in your region for topics chosen?
5. Establish length of presentations (consider contact hours - usually 30 minutes = 0.5 CEU; 60 minutes = 1 CEU).

6. Develop a program agenda template. Ensure that you build in time for:
   a. Registration - approximately 30 minutes
   b. Welcome and Introductions - approximately 10-15 minutes
   c. Breaks - approximately 10-30 minutes (on the longer side if exhibitors and/or posters are present)
   d. Lunch time for full day conference – at least 60 minutes, may need longer if speaker during lunch and/or exhibits/posters available.
   e. Wrap up/evaluation - approximately 10-15 minutes

7. Establish registration fees:
   a. Consider budget and sponsorship
   b. Early versus late fee
   c. Member versus nonmember fee
   d. Student/retired fee
   e. Walk-in availability

8. Consider the use of exhibitors as a source of income. This may depend on location and policy. Determine what to charge for exhibiting. Exhibits/booths cannot be in the presentation room. Include exhibitor numbers in final count for room size and food.
   a. Exhibitors – Commercial support
   b. Non-profit companies – often have reduced exhibitor fee
   c. Local Organizations
   d. Employers

9. Unrestricted educational grants are also available from pharmaceutical or other vendors. They cannot make any demands on how the money is to be used.

10. Create brochures and save-the-date flyers
    a. Brochures should include:
       i. Title of Conference
       ii. ACNN logo
       iii. Date and time
       iv. Location
       v. Tele of videoconferencing options
       vi. Objectives
       vii. Agenda (include faculty)
       viii. Registration fee (include early bird rates and deadlines if applicable)
       ix. Registration process with deadlines (consider including tear off sheet with required registrant information)
       x. Contact person, address, phone number and email address for registration submissions and inquiries.
       xi. Link to online registration if available.
       xii. Availability of CEUs (indicate if it is an accredited program)
    b. Save-the-date flyers should include:
       i. Title of Conference
       ii. ACNN logo
iii. Date and time  
iv. Location  
v. Objectives (identify theme if there is one)  
vi. Speakers and/or topics – especially if nationally known speaker  
c. Remember that many people require at least a 2 month notice to request time off and/or funding for conferences

11. Publicity for conference:  
a. Mail/email save-the-date information/flyer to (for example):  
i. ACNN regional members (obtain information from ACNN Office)  
ii. Local organizations/chapters  
iii. Local hospital continuing education departments  
iv. Child neurologists in area  
v. Local professional nursing organizations  
vi. School nurses  
vii. Colleges or schools of nursing  
b. Post on ACNN website  
c. Reminders sent via e-mail blasts

SECTION 5  
VIDEO AND TELECONFERENCING

Video and/or teleconferencing are alternate methods to provide the regional conferences. These modes can be used independent or in conjunction with a live conference. Participants at each site can view/listen to the conference and interact with the speakers and other audience members. Video/teleconferencing allows for interactive participation without the expense and inconvenience of travel.

1. Planning for video/teleconferencing capability should start early so that information can be included in the conference brochure.  
2. Identify the resource person responsible for video/teleconferencing at your site or institution to determine availability, technology available and requirements, and begin the planning process.  
3. Depending on the technology available, designated video/tele conferencing sites may be available for groups and/or individuals may be able to participate from individual locations (e.g., home or office).  
4. Make connections with potential remote group video/teleconferencing sites early to determine interest, space and technology availability. A point person at each location is necessary to coordinate attendance and manage the technological aspects of the site.  
5. For individual video/teleconference participants (joining from individual site/personal computer), specific software may be necessary and an internet link/connection instructions should be provided in advance of the conference. If only utilizing telecommunication, presenter slides should be provided in advance.
6. Consider reduced registration fees for individuals participating by video/teleconference. Also consider a group registration fee for a group site.

SECTION 6
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Develop a budget for costs of program as applicable. Potential costs include:
   a. Facility rental
   b. Audiovisual equipment and support
   c. Furniture and linen rental (e.g., table(s) and chair(s) for registration, exhibitors)
   d. Printing of program booklet, handouts, etc. – utilizing electronic modes (e.g., email, links to materials) can decrease these costs
   e. Refreshments/meals
   f. Publicity (brochures, flyers)- printing and mailing (as above, use electronic modes when available), cost to purchase membership lists from certain organizations
   g. Honoraria and travel expenses for invited speakers (optional)
   h. Contact Hour fees
   i. Other incidental expenses (e.g., name tags, pens, parking for invited speakers)

2. Identify potential sources of income include:
   a. Exhibitors (e.g., pharmaceutical, health organizations)
   b. Corporate sponsored unrestricted educational grants (approach personal contacts such as pharmaceutical company representatives or relevant charitable organizations you often deal with)
   c. ACNN Grant
   d. Registration fees
   e. Organizational support either through operational funds or philanthropy

3. Identify means to defray costs:
   a. Use hospital or employer facility that would not charge (or require minimal payment) for AV or room
   b. Identify faculty willing to speak for no fee
   c. Plan conference with no or minimal food requirements. Would probably require close food location(s) for individual purchase
   d. Half as opposed to full day conference, have it on a Saturday
   e. Utilize electronic means of communication and publicity

4. Have clear plans for any excess monies raised by the conference (i.e. return of seed money to ACNN, use for another conference in the region). ACNN needs to be involved in budget planning and what will be done with any excess funds.
SECTION 7
PROGRAM TIMELINES

TIMELINE TEMPLATE - The suggested dates below can be adjusted based on final date of regional conference.

1. 12 months before:
   a. Formulate a planning committee and identify a Chairperson.
   b. Create a list of tasks and identify persons responsible.

2. 10-11 months before:
   a. Create a budget.
   b. Determine a conference theme (optional) and potential topics (based on needs assessment).
   c. Invite potential speakers (contact keynote speaker) and/or send by mail or email.
   d. Call for abstracts – if you wish to select speakers from a pool of applicants.
   e. Determine date and location of conference and book facility.

3. 9 months before:
   a. Contact potential sponsors (some may require a copy of the program agenda before agreeing to sponsor).
   b. Acknowledge receipt of abstract from corresponding author and provide an estimated confirmation of acceptance date.

4. 8 months before:
   a. For invited speakers, request an abstract of presentation once they agree to speak.
   b. Determine who will grant Contact Hours and obtain forms for completion by speakers.
   c. Start collecting required materials for Contact Hours.

5. 7 months before:
   a. Complete peer review of abstracts (if applicable).
   b. Develop a tentative program (template).
   c. Send tentative program agenda to ACNN Board of Directors for approval.

6. 5-6 months before:
   a. Send Notification of Acceptance to corresponding author that includes date and time of presentation.
   b. Request that the presenters do the following within 1 month.
      i. Confirm attendance and AV requirements.
      ii. Complete CEU forms – if you know the CE provider when calling for abstracts send the form then.
      iii. Send a brief introductory bio.
   c. If speaker slides are to be included in the program book, advise them of deadline for receipt (consider printing deadline).
   d. Send out Save-the-Date notifications.

7. 4 months before:
   a. Remind speakers to forward requested information if needed

8. 3 months before:
   a. Send out flyers/brochures by email and/or mail.
   b. Contact the ACNN Office (schussman@childneurologysociety.org) to arrange posting of conference announcement on the ACNN website.
c. Apply for Contact Hours. Determine the contact hour distribution process (during or after conference, Contact Hours for those who only attend part of the program).

d. Apply for other continuing education units as needed (CME – PA, Social work contact hours, etc.). This will be dependent on whom you think will attend your meeting.

e. Determine the content of the program book (e.g., agenda, abstracts, and copies of speaker slides, acknowledgment of sponsors, evaluation forms, and information about ACNN).

f. Request an ACNN banner from the ACNN Office if you plan to display on conference day.

9. 1-2 months before:

a. Remind speakers about the deadline for submitting slides to download or give to AV personnel.

b. Arrange printing of program book, if used, or download of material for remote access.

c. Confirm location booking and requirements (e.g., AV equipment and support, table(s) for registration, booth space and tables for exhibitors, space for refreshments/meals).

d. Send speakers final “housekeeping” information (e.g. speaker’s presentation date, time, location and A/V equipment provided). Remind speakers to submit their presentation (e.g. upload to a FTP site) - this will depend on what each individual program preference.

e. Identify tasks to be done on the day of conference and who will perform them [e.g., registration (including distribution of program books, receipts, evaluation forms, ACNN brochures/information sheets), signage (directions to meeting room), posting of ACNN banner, AV set up, program welcome and introduction, speaker introductions, presentation timer, distribution of CEUs, program wrap-up].

f. Arrange catering if food will be offered.

10. Month of Program:

a. Administer conference.

b. Provide evaluation tool.

c. Provide invited speakers honoraria (if required).

d. Distribute CEUs and registration receipts to attendees.

11. 1 month after:

a. Collate and aggregate evaluations.

b. Send thank you notes with copy of evaluations to speakers.

c. Email a Summary Report of the conference to the ACNN Board of Directors via the ACNN Office including list of attendees and their regular email addresses.

d. Complete any activities needed for contact hours.
SECTION 8
CONTACT HOUR CONSIDERATIONS

1. Options for choosing an organization to provide contact hours:
   a. Through your institution (this is sometimes easier, quicker and less inexpensive)
   b. Your local State Nurses Association(s)
   c. NAPNAP - National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
   d. AANN – Association of Neuroscience Nurses
   e. ANCC - American Nurses Credentialing Center – look for approvers by state.

2. General Information
   a. Most will charge per contact hour.
   b. Late fees are often assessed if not submitted at least 60 days (each organization has different criteria) prior to the offering.
   c. Explore if pharmacology hours are offered. (if the focus is for APNs)
   d. Will need to complete information post conference to fulfill criteria.