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NYS Gaming Commission adopts continuing education requirement for Thoroughbred trainers

The New York State Gaming Commission furthered its role as a leader in horse racing integrity and equine health and safety by unanimously adopting a rule requiring Thoroughbred trainers to obtain annual continuing education.

New York State is one of only a few jurisdictions in North America to require Thoroughbred trainers to obtain continuing education as a requirement for licensure. The rule requires that all Thoroughbred trainers, including assistant and private trainers, obtain continuing education of at least four hours each year in equine health, welfare and safety as well as small business, ethical and human resource topics.

“Creating a continuing education requirement for trainers will bring knowledge and evidence-based research to an audience that would otherwise generally not be exposed to it,” said Commission Executive Director Robert Williams. “Continuing education for trainers should improve the quality of horsemanship at New York racetracks and enhance equine welfare.”

“Continuing education is a time-honored method for professionals to achieve both personal and professional development,” said New York State Equine Medical Director Scott E. Palmer, VMD, who noted that New York-licensed veterinarians must obtain 45 hours of continuing education every three years. “I have personally found it to be very valuable, as continuing education provides an opportunity for life-long learning in diverse areas of study, sharing innovative ideas, networking with colleagues who face common occupational challenges. From a commercial standpoint, continuing education contributes to economic development of many New York industries.”

The Jockey Club, which offers [free online programs for Thoroughbred trainers](#), has endorsed the rule, as has the Association of Racing Commissioners International (ARCI).

Matt Iuliano, Executive Vice President and Executive Director of The Jockey Club stated in a comment supporting New York’s rule: “The Thoroughbred Safety Committee firmly believes that implementation of a continuing education requirement for trainers would enhance equine welfare through the improvement of horse handling and overall horsemanship.”

In addition to The Jockey Club’s offerings, the New York State Equine Medical Director will provide seminars before the commencement of each race meet. Coupled, these constitute enough continuing education to meet the requirement for two years. Additionally, the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine’s Ruffian Center for Equine Sports Medicine & Critical Care makes public presentations throughout the year. Other continuing education opportunities for Thoroughbred trainers are available online.

The State Equine Medical Director will use established criteria to approve continuing education programs:

- Programs offered by either The Jockey Club and Cornell University and have equine content will automatically qualify for approval.
- Programs that qualify for approval by the ARCI will also qualify for approval.
- Other organizations must submit program content to the Equine Medical Director to obtain approval.

Acceptable continuing education topics may include, but are not limited to equine health, welfare and safety as well as small business training, ethical topics and human resource topics.

Currently New York State requires continuing education for various occupations that require licensure through the [New York State Department of Education's Office of the Professions](#), including veterinary medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, podiatry, social work, massage therapy and more.

The new rule exempts trainers who rarely participate in New York racing, subject to the permission of the State steward. The Commission plans to develop a similar continuing education rule for Standardbred trainers.

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