

VitalStim® FAQs



Are there any other accredited courses for NMES for Dysphagia?

No. The only accredited NMES for Dysphagia course is the *VitalStim/DINES Specialty* course. It was accredited through Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) and meets National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) standards.

What if I did not attend VitalStim training by CIAO?

You must pass the VitalStim competency program in order to use a VitalStim device and implement the VitalStim Protocols. The safety and improvement of patients and the protection of your licensure are important to us. No matter what device you decide to use, CIAO Seminars **STRONGLY** recommends being trained in that device and protocol and you maintain documentation of that successful training.

Once I am a VitalStim Provider, can I train others or sign off on VitalStim competencies?

No. On the bottom of all VitalStim certificates, it states that the successful completion of the course does not qualify the certificate holder to train or deem others competent. There is a specific list of competencies which must be validated by a qualified instructor. Those documents are maintained to provide legal support for any Provider who may be called into question. These competencies are part of the FDA clearance. Professional Boards require training to be given by someone who is an expert in the field as well as in adult learning processes. The only approved VitalStim Instructors are listed on CIAO's website. All VitalStim education, including the manual, clipboard, placements and protocols are copyrighted to CIAO Seminars. If Providers would like to use any part of the VitalStim manual, they will need to contact CIAO for a temporary license release. Copyright protection includes domestic as well as international territories.

I am a VitalStim Provider, can I train others or sign off on competencies for another device?

It is not recommended! As an ethics instructor, the owner of CIAO Seminars stresses the importance of protecting yourself as a therapist and as an individual. Unless you know the specific competencies for the other device, treatment protocols, indications, contraindications, precautions, warnings and detailed FDA clearance allowances and have permission to use their copyrighted information – DO NOT!

Can I use the VitalStim device without training?

As part of the initial FDA application, the manufacturer guaranteed that all VitalStim device users would be trained through an independent education company and independent instructors (CIAO Seminars). This is written in the VitalStim device user manual. In addition, ASHA's Code of Ethics requires all SLPs to be trained prior to using a device or representing themselves as being trained. The instructor must be an expert in the field as well as experienced in adult learning processes. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) states that "only qualified professionals with specific training and experience in this ...provide evaluation and treatment"

I have not been trained in VitalStim before, can I take the VitalStim Plus course?

No, the Plus course is the follow-up advanced course to the initial VitalStim and DINES Specialty Certificate. The VitalStim Plus course will not teach you theory, placements, how the treatment works or how to determine what placements and exercises based on signs, symptoms and impairments. Those who successfully pass the Specialty Certificate competency course may use the VitalStim component of the Plus device only. Therapists must complete the Plus course in order to use all components (all 4 channels, biofeedback, sEMG; sEMG with triggered stim, VMS, etc.) of the VitalStim Plus device.

Who sells VitalStim equipment and electrodes?

There are hundreds of sales representatives around the country and world who sell VitalStim devices and electrodes. CIAO Seminars does not sell the devices or electrodes, nor do we receive any financial gains from the sale of any devices or electrodes.

Who is listed on the Registry?

VitalStim Providers who are current in the VitalStim Therapy Specialty Program and who wish to be listed. Providers are listed by their facility zip code.

For more information: [VitalStim Renewal Infographic](#)

What does it mean to be "current?"

VitalStim Providers who have received their Specialty Certificate or renewed within the last three years.

For more information: [VitalStim Renewal Infographic](#)

If I am not "current", am I still a VitalStim Provider?

Yes, once a therapist passes the training program, they are VitalStim Providers unless their status has been revoked for unethical or practicing in a manner dangerous to the patient or program. For more information: [VitalStim Renewal Infographic](#)

Why is there a 3 year requirement to be listed on the Registry?

As part of the national accreditation of the VitalStim Therapy Specialty Program, a 3 year renewal was implemented to meet NCCA standards. This requirement also allows the public searching for potential Providers in their area to find therapists who are familiar with up-to-date research, placements, protocols, indications, contraindications and safety guidelines.

Why am I not on the registry?

If you are a current VitalStim Provider, you should be listed by your facility's zip code. If you are not, please verify your CIAO profile and ensure you are not designated to be "unlisted." Call CIAO, we are happy to help get you there!

For more information: [VitalStim Renewal Infographic](#)

How can I update my information?

VitalStim Providers are able to update their information including a change in name, facility or listing preference at any time by logging into their account at www.ciaoseminars.com and updating their profile.

Can I be trained by a Sales Representative?

A Sales Rep may demonstrate to clinicians what various buttons do, how to turn devices on and off, and where to insert lead wires. This **does not meet** the professional board standards or legal standards of training. The trainer must be an expert in the clinical field as well as an expert in adult learning objectives. Training must be documented and measurable objectives achieved. In addition, CIAO Seminars owns the copyright to all VitalStim education, including the placements, charts, and protocols.

If you have any questions about this information or need support regarding the use of VitalStim, the VitalStim Registry or Renewal, please do not hesitate to contact our office. 850-916-8886.