National Health Education Week

October 21–25, 2002

Celebrating Health Education in Action

Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE)
Introduction

National Health Education Week is celebrated each year during the third week of October. This year, the Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) is promoting the celebration of Health Education in Action.

Since 1995, the National Center for Health Education (NCHE) has sponsored National Health Education Week. The 2002 theme, Medicine Education: What Children Need to Know, brings into focus health literacy and child health issues. For more information on NCHE and this important initiative, go to its website at http://www.nche.org.

This booklet is a guide to celebrate health education efforts. You are encouraged to use the creativity of the people in your agency and community to make National Health Education Week a success.

This guide will assist you to:

- organize and plan activities for the week
- brainstorm ways to reach populations of interest through health promotion activities
- promote the work of health education in your community
- provide you with resources to assist your efforts

Celebrate your contributions to health and health education within your agency and community. Best wishes for a successful campaign!
Planning and Coordinating National Health Education Week

State or local coordination is essential to the impact of National Health Education Week. The following steps outline a plan for the development and implementation of your activities.

**Step 1: Deciding to participate in National Health Education Week.**

**Step 2: Forming a planning committee.**

You can recruit members from agencies that do health education in your local area.

**Step 3: Recruiting other agencies that are involved in health promotion to participate.**

**Step 4: Deciding activities to incorporate in your local celebration.**

Health education organizations have created materials for distribution such as the examples included in this guide. Take advantage of those materials and put them into action.

Capitalize on events that you may be already doing during that week and put a celebrating health education efforts spin on it.

Check out SOPHE’s Top 15 Tips to Celebrate National Health Education Week 2002.

Some other activities could include:

- Develop a statewide marketing plan for the week
- Plan statewide or local events
- Create award ceremonies recognizing health educators and exemplar programs
- Publicize the profession through mass media
Highlights of 2002 National Health Education Week
SOPHE Chapter Activities

Here are some activities that SOPHE chapters are planning to do to celebrate National Health Education Week.

Arkansas

As Arkansas' only pediatric medical center, Children's Hospital has taken a proactive leadership role with our outreach efforts to help insure the future health and safety of children in our state. Our community outreach programs are collectively called "Wellness on Wheels" to reflect the hospital's emphasis on reaching children and adults throughout Arkansas with informative health education programs relating to child safety, wellness and prevention.

- "Health and Safety" classroom presentations are an extremely effective way of providing basic health and safety information to children in kindergarten through 6th grade. The hospital's Health Educator provides fun and informative presentations, plus a special goody bag for each student. Topics offered are: Healthy Habits and Be Safe-Be Smart. Last school year these presentations were made to over 15,000 children across the state.

- Five mobile Fire Safety Houses are excellent training tools for instructing school-age children on how to appropriately respond should their home catch on fire. With two training rooms, props and non-toxic smoke, the Fire Safety House teaches children about smoke detectors, checking doors, two ways out, and the importance of not hiding during a fire.

- We also have other programs geared for adults such as our Child Passenger Safety program and our Speakers Bureau.

Georgia

The GFPHE-SOPHE chapter has requested that the governor of Georgia proclaim the week of October 21 through October 25 National Health Education Week. They are also hosting a 2002 Advocacy Summit to focus on skills-building and issue-focused sessions.

New England SOPHE

New England SOPHE is hosting a conference just a few days shy of Health Education Week on Obesity and Eating Disorders: Two Sides of the Same Coin. The conference will be held on Friday, October 18, 2002 from 8:30 am - 4:00 pm at Worcester State College (Worcester, Massachusetts; Info: (508) 849-4231; Jean Kapetanios, CIGNA HealthCare, Inc.)

Missouri

We are in the process of developing a press release highlighting the week and its focus, "Medical Education: What Children Should Know." The release describes the role of the health educator and includes a quote from the Oklahoma State Commissioner of Health, Dr. Leslie Beitsch. It also lists websites specifically geared toward children and teenagers regarding the many health issues they face.
# SOPHE’S TOP 15 TIPS TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL HEALTH EDUCATION WEEK 2002

1. Write a Proclamation recognizing and celebrating Health Education by the state governor, the mayor, or administrator of your organization
2. Coordinate a Job Shadow Day to encourage careers in health education
3. Coordinate a departmental Open House to highlight Health Education in Action with posters and pictures
4. Give presentations to community agencies about health education and your local activities
5. Sponsor community health activities that week for the theme of “Health Education Works for You.”
6. Write a letter to the editor about health education
7. Feature National Health Education Week on your agency’s website
8. Disseminate the Health Education Kudos or Awards to recognize best practices or programs via a chapter/organization listserv
9. Write a recognition letter to someone outstanding in the field
10. Write a Dear Ann Landers letter to a local newspaper
11. Host a staff appreciation breakfast or luncheon for public health workers who practice health education
12. Host a mall event in the community spotting health programs
13. Draft a newsletter article about health education
14. Host a health fair for the community or other public health workers
15. Check out the National Health Education Week Planning Guide at http://www.sophe.org
Description of Health Education

Since early in the 20th century, health educators have played an important role in addressing challenges to our health. In the past, when the biggest killers in this country were infectious diseases such as smallpox, science and medicine helped bring these killers more under control. In those efforts the role of the health educator was paramount. Then and now health educators provided expertise in shaping messages, sharing information about different infectious diseases, designing health programs and campaigns, and helping consumers understand disease risks and appropriate ways for improving health status. Now, the greatest threats to our health are chronic diseases like cancer, heart disease, diabetes, AIDS, obesity, injuries, as well as biological agents. In addressing these threats, the job of health educators involves a knowledge-base and skill set aimed at improving and maintaining the health of individuals, families, and communities.

Definition of a Health Educator

The official Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) definition of a health educator is as follows: “promotes, maintains, and improves individual and community health by teaching individuals and communities how to assume responsibility for addressing health care issues. They collect and analyze data to identify community needs prior to planning, implementing, monitoring, and interpreting programs designed to encourage healthy behaviors. May also serve as a resource to assist the individual or community and may administer fiscal resources for health education programs.”

Foundations of Health Education

Health education is a social science that draws from the biological, environmental, psychological, physical, and medical sciences to promote health and prevent disease, disability, and premature death through theory-based voluntary behavior change activities, programs, campaigns, and research. It is an essential public health service that has people practicing each of the core functions of public health: assessment, policy development, and quality assurance. By focusing on prevention, health education reduces the financial and human costs that individuals, employers, medical facilities, insurance companies, and the nation would spend on medical treatment.

The Health Education Workforce

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that there are more than 40,000 community health educators in the U.S. Many health educators specialize in health education or community health (trained and/or certified health education specialists). They practice in schools, colleges, workplaces, medical care settings, public health settings, community-based agencies and organizations and other settings. Others perform selected health education functions as part of what they consider their primary responsibility (medical treatment, nursing, social work, substance abuse/HIV counselors, oral hygiene, etc.). Lay workers may also learn on the job to do specific, limited educational tasks to encourage healthy behavior. While para-professionals and health professionals from other disciplines may offer health education services, they may not be familiar with the specialized body of
health education and behavior change knowledge, skills, theories, and research, nor is it their primary interest or professional development focus.

**Training in Health Education**

Being a health educator requires specialized study. Over 250 colleges and universities in the U.S. offer professional preparation programs in health education with degrees varying from baccalaureate to doctorate. Health education has entry-level and advanced level competencies that serve as basis for professional practice. For example, health educators can assess the need for and plan, develop, implement, manage, and evaluation health programs in collaboration with medical staff and community agencies. Nationally, health educators also may receive a special certification in the field, Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES), from the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc (NCHEC). A CHES is specifically trained to effectively assess health education needs; plan, implement, and evaluate programs; build coalitions and coordinate the provision of health services; identify resources; act as an advocate for health issues; and communicate health education needs. CHES are re-certified every five years based on documentation of participation in 75 hours of approved continuing education activities. Employing a Certified Health Education Specialists gives your organization professionals who have demonstrated expertise in health education, will increase the effective of your programs, and have contemporary skills and knowledge of health education through their continuing education requirements.

**Science of Health Education**

While health educators are traditionally associated with brochures and videos, this association only minimally defines their capacities. Health education in practice has an ecological approach in creating healthy communities. Health educators work at the individual, group, institutional, community and systemic levels to improve health knowledge, attitudes, and skills for the purpose of changing or encouraging behaviors that relate to optimal health status.

The field provides a scientific backdrop that has established strong theories for converting poor health habits to health enhancing behaviors. This rich information is shared in theory-based journals that are renowned in the public health field for the latest research and best practice. These journals include *Health Education & Behavior, American Journal of Health Promotion, Journal of Health Promotion Practice, Journal of Health Education* to name a few. Health educators also belong to health education professional organizations and adhere to a professional code of ethics.

**National Health Education Week**

Health education is celebrated nationally during National Health Education Week during the third week of October. This celebration is an effort to focus national attention on a major public health problem, provide public education on the issue, and improve consumers’ understanding of the role of health education in promoting the public’s health. This year the theme is “Medicine Education: What Children Need to Know.”
Health Education Organizations

To learn more about the field of health education, please contact one of the following member organizations of the Coalition of National Health Education Organizations.

American Association for Health Education
1900 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191
800-213-7193
http://www.aahperd.org/aahe

American College Health Association
PO Box 28937
Baltimore, MD 21240
410-859-1500
http://www.acha.org

American School Health Association
7263 State Route 43
PO Box 708
Kent, OH 44240
330-678-1601
http://www.ashaweb.org

Association of State and Territorial Directors of Health Promotion and Public Health Education
1101 15th St. NW, Suite 601
Washington, DC 20005
202-659-2230
http://www.astdhpphe.org/

Eta Sigma Gamma
The National Professional Health Education Honorary
2000 University Avenue, Muncie, Indiana 47306
800-715-2559
http://www.bsu.edu/web/esg/

Public Health Education and Health Promotion Section and School Health Education and Services Section, American Public Health Association
800 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20002
202-777-APHA (2742)
http://www.apha.org/
http://www.jhsph.edu/hao/phehp/

Society for Public Health Education
750 First Street, NE, Suite 910
Washington, DC 20002
202-408-9804
http://www.sophe.org
Date

Dear Colleague:

The week of October 21-25, 2002 is National Health Education Week. In honor of this week I wanted to recognize our health educators, not only for their many contributions in improving the public’s health, but also for sharing their specialized knowledge of health education with staff and colleagues.

Health education is a social science that draws from the biological, environmental, psychological, physical and medical sciences to promote health and prevent disease, disability and premature death through education-driven voluntary behavior change activities. By focusing on prevention, health education reduces the costs that would otherwise be spent on treatment services.

Health educators promote, maintain, and improve individual and community health by teaching individuals and communities how to assume responsibility for addressing health care issues. They collect and analyze data to identify community needs prior to planning, implementing, monitoring, and interpreting programs designed to encourage healthy behaviors. They often serve as a resource to assist the individual or community and administer fiscal resources for health education programs.

To support National Health Education Week, the (your agency) is presenting a display in our lobby at (address). Please take a few moments during the week to stop by the exhibit to learn about health education and the important work health educators are doing (across the state/in your agency).

Thanks you in advance for your support of health education.

Sincerely,

The BOSS

Possible Optional Paragraph:

This past year our (health educator/health education team) has successfully completed numerous projects. For example, (Action verb + program + for target pop + outcome)…
Sample Syndicated Columnist Letter
on the Health Education Profession

DATE

Syndicated Health Columnist
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Name:

One of the best-kept secrets in the United States health field is the health educator. We're writing to request your support in promoting National Health Education Week, Oct. 21-25, 2002. The purpose of National Health Education Week is to celebrate and recognize the contributions of health education to improving the public's health. While many health professionals often take on health education roles in the performance of their primary professional responsibilities, health education is an independent profession in its own right and health educators are an integral part of any community's health promotion and health care team. Health care consumers, health professionals, people interested in getting and/or staying healthy and young people interested in exciting health-related careers could benefit greatly from your presentation of the facts about the health education profession. There are well over 40,000 of us, and we have an impressive track record!

Using the behavioral and social science theories and program planning strategies we studied in college and/or graduate school Based on our training in the social, medical and behavioral sciences, Health Educators can help communities, groups, and individuals identify their health concerns and develop appropriate plans of action and resources to address them. Using our education and communications training, Health Educators educate people, not just inform them, about diseases, injuries and disabilities through presentations, educational materials, and mass media campaigns. Having studied the health care system and health and consumer behavior, we know how to effectively facilitate health care and health promotion decision making, help patients negotiate medical care systems, and train and work with medical and allied health professionals to increase the likelihood that patients will comply with medical treatments and recommendations. Trained in community organizing and group dynamics, we can organize community health initiatives, build coalitions, and advocate for political and organizational policies conducive to health. Whether the challenge is bioterrorism, depression, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, AIDS, substance abuse, injuries or other health issues, professional Health Educators have the core diagnostic, planning, evaluation, communication and coordination skills to educate for the prevention, early detection and treatment. Where do we do our health education? We work in healthcare facilities, colleges/universities, K-12 schools, workplaces, government agencies, voluntary agencies, and community organizations. No other profession is trained in the competencies associated with professional health education since 1989.
Health educators want to remind your readers that health educators are an important resource in the fight against preventable deaths and injuries. As you have often told us, prevention is much less expensive than treatment! Health education, performed effectively by trained health education professionals saves lives, reduces premature deaths, and saves taxpayers' money.

For more information about health education, contact the Society for Public Health Education (www.sophe.org) or the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc. (www.nchec.org).

Yours in health,

Name
SAMPLE Proclamation for National Health Education Week

WHEREAS, the State of <NAME OF STATE, CITY> has a vital interest in maintaining the health of its residents so that they lead healthy, productive lives; and

WHEREAS, health education is an essential component of disease prevention, health promotion, and health reform; and

WHEREAS, one goal of the <NAME OF CHAPTER OR ORGANIZATION>, is to represent health education ideas and principles in the legislative and public arena and to respond to legislation affecting the health and welfare of <NAME OF STATE, CITY> residents; and

WHEREAS, Public Health Educators have an ethical responsibility to use sound educational processes to promote health and influence human well-being; and

WHEREAS, <NAME OF CHAPTER OR ORGANIZATION> is a professional service organization dedicated to the professional growth of its members through a communication core and network for all health educators in the <NAME OF STATE, CITY>, and maintains high standards of professional competence through a credentialing process based on the roles, responsibilities, and competencies of a health educator; and

WHEREAS, the <NAME OF CHAPTER OR ORGANIZATION> promotes the health of all residents of the <NAME OF STATE, CITY> by providing sound health promotion, disease prevention/management interventions in all health care settings; and

WHEREAS, in celebration of National Health Education Week, national, state and local collaboration is essential to support the National Health Education theme asthma.

NOW, THEREFORE, I <NAME OF GOVERNOR, MAYOR, ELECTED OFFICIAL, OR HEALTH COMMISSIONER> of the <NAME OF STATE, CITY>, do hereby proclaim

October 21-25, 2002

as

Health Education Week

And urge all communities to take part in activities designed to enhance awareness of public health education by supporting and encouraging participation in National Health Education Week.
During Health Education Week, October 21-25, 2002, health educators will have the opportunity to encourage the students of America to consider a career in health education.

Through *job shadowing* a student can spend a day on the job with a health educator to gain first-hand experience in the workplace.

The goal of Health Education Job Shadow Day is to provide today’s youth with a better understanding of the role of a health educator and to create awareness of the possibility of a future career in health education.

Health educators must recognize the importance of job shadowing to secure the future of health education. Health educators in all work settings – schools, communities, healthcare organizations and businesses– must take an active role in promoting the future pool of our health education workforce.

Your efforts can make a difference – and can be fun!

**Who Benefits from Health Education Job Shadow Day?**

Employers  Students  Health Educators

EVERYONE
### Plan Ahead!!!

**Health Education Job Shadow Day is coming soon.**

*The more prepared you are, the more effective the day will be.*

#### September 2002

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**Week 1:**
- Establish guidelines for participants and develop materials & planning activities for Shadow Day
- Contact & send materials to community organizations, businesses, & schools to recruit health educators interested in participating

**Week 2:**
- Follow-up with community organizations, businesses, and schools to get the names of health educators who will be participating, then create a contact list of participating health educators and a description of their workplace
- Send the marketing materials and workplace descriptions to academic institutions and youth organizations in your community (see suggestions on page 4)
- Send the media kits to local newspapers, newsletters, radio stations, and television stations

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Week 3:
- Follow-up with the academic institutions and youth organizations to get the names of students who will be participating, then create a contact list of participating students
- Send orientation packets to health educators and students (see suggestions on page 4)
- Create an evaluation tool for the health educators and the students (see suggestions on page 4)

Week 4:
- Make sure all participants received their orientation packets
- Set up a joint meeting for all the health educators and students as a forum for any questions or concerns they may have
- Send updates to local media contacts

Week 5:
- Make sure everyone has the materials they need
- Follow-up with any questions or concerns

Suggested Local Organizations to Contact and Send Marketing Materials to:
- National School-to-Work Opportunities Office (STW)
- Girl Scouts of America/Boy Scouts of America
- Chamber of Commerce
- Local school boards
- Junior Achievement (JA)
- Local school health education teachers
- Community Kids Corp
- University health science/health education departments
- Young Entrepreneurs’ Organization
- Young America’s Foundation, Inc
- Local newspapers, radio and television stations

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Ideas for Marketing Materials:
- Posters
- Brochures
- Sign up lists for interested students & health educators
- General List of Benefits for Participants
- Handouts

Ideas for Student Orientation Packets:
- A parental/guardian consent form and medical authorization form (in case of an emergency)
- Explanation of Job Shadowing and the goal of Health Education Job Shadow Day
- List of the benefits of participating in Job Shadow Day
- Contact information & job description of the health educator the student will be shadowing
- Description of the organization the student will be visiting
- Pointers for visiting the workplace
- Sample resume to help the student create their own resume
- Evaluation forms

Ideas for Health Educator Orientation Packets:
- Contact information of the student that will be shadowing the health educator
- Explanation of Job Shadowing and the goal of Health Education Job Shadow Day
- List of the benefits of participating in Job Shadow Day
- Suggestions of activities and discussions for Job Shadow Day
- Evaluation forms

Suggestions for Student Preparation:
- Write down their expectations for Job Shadow Day
- Compose questions to ask the health educator in an interview
- Write down their expectations of job shadowing day, what they want to gain from the experience
- Prepare a resume or a description of your interests for a possible future career

Suggestions for Health Educator Preparation:
- Prepare a brief introduction and workplace orientation for the student’s arrival
- Include an organizational chart of the workplace and your job description
- Allow students to accompany you to meetings and/or presentations
- Organize workplace activities for the students to benefit from

What to include in Student Evaluations:
- Enter the name and title of the individual you shadowed
- What about his/her job interested you? What did not?
- Would you choose a career in this field? Why or why not?
- Were your expectations met? Why or why not?
- What personal skills were you able to apply at the workplace?
- What skills would you need before choosing a career in this field?
- Were the orientation packets and materials sent helpful to you? Why or why not?

What to include in Health Educator Evaluations:
- Enter the name of the student that shadowed you.
- Did you believe that the experience was valuable to the student?
- What would you change about Job Shadow Day?
- What would you keep the same?
- Would you participate again in Job Shadow Day?
- Would you recommend others to participate?
- Were the orientation packets and materials sent helpful to you? Why or why not?