



Society for Public Health Education, Inc.

Resolution

Qualifications of Health Education Specialists

Originally Adopted July 8, 1994 – Revised and Adopted August 9, 2017

Whereas, health education is essential to preventing disease and injury by influencing behaviors, systems, environments and policies.

Whereas, health education specialists are needed to provide the public with evidence-based programs that address prevention by addressing the social determinants of health, strategically forming partnerships to improve health outcomes, and to improve health policy.¹

Whereas, health education specialists provide safe and effective programs when implemented by professionally competent and ethical practitioners. Qualified health educators are equipped to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate programs to identified populations.²

Whereas, roles, responsibilities and competencies for entry and advanced levels of health education have been established by the health education profession.³

Whereas, the health education profession is dedicated to excellence in the practice of promoting individual, family, organizational and community health and abides by the Health Education Code of Ethics as the basis of shared values in practice.⁴

Whereas, health educators are a defined occupation according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics and can execute responsibilities that other professionals do not have the training or expertise to perform.⁴ In 2014 there were 61,400 health educators employed and there is an expected 12% increase in health educators from 2014-2024.⁵

Whereas, the health education profession provides assurance of professional competence to the

growing field of health education through the credentialing mechanisms of graduation from an accredited/approved health education program and individual certification.⁶⁻⁷

Whereas, health education specialists that deliver evidence-based interventions have a documented return on investment and play a valuable role in controlling health care costs and improving quality.⁸

Therefore, be it resolved, the Society for Public Health Education, Inc. (SOPHE), recommends to employers that all position descriptions with primary health education responsibilities state preferences for candidates with competence demonstrated through:

1. Graduation from a Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) accredited school or program at the doctoral, masters, or undergraduate levels.
2. Graduation from an accredited program for teacher education in health education at the masters and baccalaureate levels.
3. Graduation from formerly SABPAC approved health education program at the baccalaureate level.
4. Credentialing as a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) at the entry level or Master Certified Health Education Specialist (MCHES) at the advanced-level of health education.

Be it finally resolved, that SOPHE shall distribute a copy this resolution with an appropriate cover letter to:

1. Professional organizations concerned with the education and practice of health education specialists such as the American Public Health Association, American School Health Association, American College Health Association, Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health, Directors of Health Promotion and Education, Council on Education for Public Health, Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Coalition of National Health Education Organizations, etc.
2. The Offices of the President and the Surgeon General of the United States.

3. Federal agencies, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services, Department of Labor, National Institutes of Health, Veterans Administration, Health Resources and Services Administration, etc.
4. The Departments of Public Health in each state and territory.
5. Non-profit organizations such as the American Hospital Association, American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, March of Dimes, etc.
6. Regional and local employers of health education specialists, including unions and human resource professionals, as may be identified by Chapters and/or individual SOPHE members.

References

- 1) Fielding, J. E. (2013). Health education 2.0: the next generation of health education practice. *Health Education & Behavior: The Official Publication of the Society for Public Health Education*, 40(5), 513-519. doi:10.1177/1090198113502356. Accessed June 12, 2017.
- 2) National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc. (n.d.). Responsibilities and Competencies for Health Education Specialists. Retrieved from <https://www.nchec.org/responsibilities-and-competencies>. Accessed June 12, 2017.
- 3) National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc. (NCHEC). (n.d.). Health education specialist practice analysis (HESPA) study: Executive summary. Retrieved from www.nchec.org/assets/2251/executive_summary.pdf. Accessed June 12, 2017.
- 4) Coalition of National Health Education Organizations. (2011). Code of Ethics for the Health Education Profession. Retrieved from <http://www.cnheo.org/ethics.html>. Accessed May 8, 2017.
- 5) Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2016-17 Edition, Health Educators and Community Health Workers, on the Internet at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/health-educators.htm>. Accessed May 9, 2017.
- 6) National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc. (n.d.). Health Education Profession. Retrieved from <https://www.nchec.org/profession>. Accessed May 8, 2017.
- 7) Council on Education for Public Health. (2017). Understanding Accreditation. Retrieved from <https://ceph.org/about/understanding-accreditation/>. Accessed May 8, 2017.
- 8) American Public Health Association. (2015). The Role of Health Education Specialists in a Post-Health Care Reform Environment. <https://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2016/01/27/13/58/role-of-health-education-specialists>. Accessed August 7, 2017.