

The System and Utilization of Health Education in the United States

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This is a good time to be a health educator in America. The focus of the United States health care system is being redefined by managed care. As the system steadily moves from an emphasis on sickness to wellness, there is increased awareness of the significant role that health education and health educators play in promoting health and wellness in our communities. In addition, growth and change in demographics, along with the increasing diversity of the population, have also generated the need for health education and health educators. For example, there are many different types of health educators, such as epidemiologists, nurses, and conference planners. These health educators are trained in a variety of settings, including schools of public health, schools of social work, health administration programs, and managed care organizations. The settings in which they practice include governmental entities, voluntary health agencies, corporations and businesses, clinical care, community centers, and public schools.

Health education is crucial to our understanding and treating health problems; but it must constantly evolve and adapt to meet and reflect changes in the health care environment. The roles and settings for

health education and health educators and the skills and training needed to help health educators better serve our communities are examined within the context of our ever changing health care system.

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Continuing Education for Health Educators

Continuing Education for health educators is defined as educational experiences which assist in the development or enhancement of knowledge and skills directly related to the seven responsibilities and related competencies for health educators.

What is Health Education ?

Health Education is a process concerned with designing, implementing, and evaluating educational programs that enable individuals, families, groups, organization, and communities to play active roles in achieving, protecting, and sustaining health. Its purpose is to contribute to health and well-being by promoting lifestyles, community actions, and conditions that make it possible to live healthful lives.

* Code of Ethics of Health Educators, Association for the Advancement of Health Education

What is a Health Educator ?

Health Educators help to organize and develop community interests, study, and action toward the solution of health problem. They are dedicated to improving the health of individuals and groups through educational interventions and other strategies that are characterized by respect for competing value systems, an overriding commitment to self determination, justice, and the right of individuals to make informed choices.

* Code of Ethics of Health Educators, Association for the Advancement of Health Education
Breckon, D.J., Harvey,J.R., & Lancaster, R.B.(1994). Community health education: Settings, roles,

and skills for the 21st Century. (3rd ed.). Gaithersburg, MD; Aspen Publishers, Inc.

Certification of Health Educators

Reasons for Certification

- growing marketplace interest in and demand for health education
- tendency of some to refer to themselves or their staff as health educators
- increasing concern about professional standards and quality assurance
- college and university training of health educators, demands of the marketplace and professional organizations, and institutional restraints

Certified Health Education Specialist(CHES)

- CHES examination
- health education minor/major

Areas of Responsibilities and Related

- Assessing individual and community needs for health education
- Planning effective health education programs
- Implementing health education programs
- Evaluating effectiveness of health education programs
- Coordinating provision of health education services
- Acting as a resource in health education
- Communicating health and health education needs, concerns, and resource's

Continuing Education Contact Hours(CECH)

Means of Obtaining CECH

- conference sessions, workshops, seminars
- directed self-study
- teleconferencing, video taped presentation, or Internet activity
- presentation at an NCHEC designated event (1 CECH for each hour presenting)

- college level course work (Category II CECH)
- authorship in NCHEC designated publications

* 75 CECH requirement for recertification

The National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc.(NCHEC)

Mission Statement

The mission of the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc. is to improve the quality of health education practice through the establishment, implementation, and maintenance of a certification process for health education specialists, and through the promotion of scientific, ethical, and state-of-the-art programs of professional and continuing education.

Health Education Programs

Degrees Offered

Bachelor's

Master's

Doctorate

Specialist

Areas of Concentration

Community / Public

Health Education

School Health Education

Medical Care

Setting / Patient

Education

Worksite Health

Education

Where do Health Educators Work ?

Schools

Communities

Post Secondary Educational

Institutions

Local and State Health

Departments

Public Health Agencies
Medical Care Institutions
Voluntary Health Organizations
Where do Health Educators Work ?
Worksites (Business and industry)
Rehabilitation Centers
Professional Associations
Environmental Agencies
Mental Health Agencies
Health Clubs
Insurance Companies

Working in Health Departments

Planning Interventions

- community organization
- organizational development
- group process
- communication

Working in Health Departments and Other State and Federal Agencies

- Collaborating With Environmentalists
- Working with Public Health Nurses
- Working with Planners and Epidemiologists

Working in Hospitals, HMOs(Health Maintenance Organizations), or Profit-Making Organizations

Hospitals

- reduced length of stay
- patient education
- health promotion / wellness

- prevention
- cost containment
- prevention

HMOs and Other Profit-Making Organizations

- cost containment
- prevention

Working in School Settings

School Health Education

- community health
- consumer health
- environmental health
- family life
- growth and development
- nutrition
- personal health
- disease prevention and control
- safety and accident prevention
- substance use and abuse

Working in College and Universities

- research
- teaching
- advising
- curriculum development

Health Education in the 21st Century

1. Settings

- Medical Care Settings, Worksite Programs, and Private Practice

- Schools
 - Home of Clients Receiving Home Health Care
 - Health Departments
2. Technology
 3. Health Education Topics
 4. Funding
 5. Diversity (changing demographics)
 6. Recruitment and Training of Minority Health Educators