

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH EDUCATION COMPETENCIES UPDATE PROJECT (CUP) FINDINGS ON INDIVIDUAL CERTIFICATION

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This CHES Spring Bulletin report is based on the paper presented at the Third National Congress for Institutions Preparing Health Educators held in Dallas, Texas from February 23-25, 2006. The paper discussed the implications of the CUP findings on individual certification. It addressed the impact in terms of revision to the entry-level (CHES) examination and the supporting publications. It discussed the possibility of an advanced certification and the relationship of that concept to the recommendations of the National Task Force on Accreditation.

I would like to begin by thanking all those who contributed in any way to the National Health Educator Competencies Update Project (CUP). I would like to acknowledge the dedicated scholarship, enduring teamwork and careful stewardship of the CUP Steering Committee, Gary Gilmore, Larry Olsen and Alyson Taub. Also, thank you to those who served on the CUP Data Analysis Group, the CUP Advisory Committee, and all of the health educators who completed the CUP survey. Lastly, we are extremely grateful to all those who volunteer on the NCHEC Board of Commissioners and Division Boards, and NCHEC staff for their work in the continued implementation process of the CUP report.



The CUP final report was received by the copyright holders (AAHE, SOPHE and NCHEC) in the fall of 2004. The CUP report underwent a review process by respected health education professionals, and was also reviewed by each Commissioner and Director of the NCHEC boards. The Board of Commissioners (BOC) appointed a CUP Implementation Subcommittee in January 2005. The CUP report was officially accepted by the three copyright holders by May 2005. These organizations endorsed the four recommendations to the profession. Of particular note was Recommendation #2: "NCHEC should use all 7 of the health education responsibilities and the 29 competencies and 82 subcompetencies identified as entry-level in the new hierarchical model as the for revisions to its entry-level CHES examination."



The revision of the entry-level (CHES) exam is under the purview of NCHEC's Division Board for the Certification of Health Education Specialists (DBCHEs). That group commissioned PES (Professional Examination Services) to analyze the CUP report in regard to incorporating those results into the CHES exam. A subgroup of the DBCHEs performed a detailed analysis of the differences in the CUP model compared to the previous framework of health education responsibilities, competencies and subcompetencies. The blueprint upon which the revised exam questions will be based was then revised at the August 2005 meeting. The DBCHEs will continue the next steps in the development of a revised exam which include exam construction, pass point determination, and printing new forms of the exam. The revised entry-level exam will first be used in the October 2007 administration of the exam.

Revised entry-level exam debuts October 2007

As a result of the CUP findings, a new publication, *A Competency-Based Framework for Health Educators - 2006*, has been developed which incorporates both the entry- and advanced-level competencies and subcompetencies. We would like to acknowledge the tireless work of the writers of that document, Stephen Stewart, Thomas Butler, Susan Radius, and Donna Videto, as well as many contributing writers and reviewers. The order form is available on the NCHEC website. A revised Study Guide is anticipated by the end of 2006. These documents should be used in preparation for the fall 2007 exam. For use in the meantime, the existing entry and graduate frameworks, plus the current study guide, will continue to be available until fall 2007.

NEW for use in preparing for the Fall 2007 exam:

- *A Competency-Based Framework for Health Educators - 2006 - New Publication.***
- *Revised Study Guide - available by the end of 2006***

Existing publications available through Spring 2007:

- *A Competency-Based Framework for Professional Development of Certified Health Education Specialists (1996)***
- *The Health Education Specialist: A Study Guide for Professional Competence (2000)***
- *A Competency-Based Framework for Graduate-Level Health Educators (1999)***

Order at <http://www.nchec.org/pubs/pubs.htm>

IMPLICATIONS, continued



In addition to the need for the revisions to the existing entry exam, the CUP findings indicate differentiation in the levels of practice of health educators. This supports the possibility of one or even two levels of advanced certification. Before proceeding with an advanced credential, there are many things to determine. Is there sufficient interest in an advanced certification to support the costs that would be incurred to create it? If so, should it be one or perhaps two levels in line with the two advanced levels reported in the CUP findings?

What would be the basis of eligibility, education degrees, experience, or perhaps a combination? Would candidates first need to pass the entry-level exam? What mechanism would be used - examination, portfolio review, documentation of experience, a combination? Also, once an advanced credential is achieved, what would be the requirement for recertification of that credential in terms of continuing education? All of these questions are still to be determined and are being evaluated by NCHEC's CUP Implementation Committee.

An advanced credential is being considered by NCHEC because:

- *CUP findings indicate the presence of an advanced-level of practice.
- *Comments (HEDIR discussions, NCHEC office reports) regarding current entry-level certification not being "representative" of persons with advanced degrees
- *Recommendations from the National Task Force on Accreditation to distinguish levels of practice:

- Recommendation #5. "That new designations should be created to distinguish the practice level of health educators at the undergraduate and graduate levels, parallel with other professional disciplines such as nursing and social work."

- Recommendation #6. "That the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing (NCHEC) is the appropriate entity to oversee the process of individual certification at both the undergraduate and graduate levels."

Topics mentioned above were the focus of presentations at the Third National Congress for Institutions Preparing

Health Educators as mentioned earlier. Plenary and concurrent sessions discussed changes to certification, professional preparation and professional development as a result of the CUP findings and in alignment with the recommendations of the National Task Force on Accreditation. For more information on the proceedings, visit the website, www.healthedaccred.org.



NCHEC is currently preparing a survey to determine interest and suggestions for an advanced certification. Look for survey and comment opportunities and information in the future on the website, www.nchech.org. This topic also will be further explored by the CUP Implementation Subcommittee, DBCHES, and the NCHEC Board of Commissioners. Any questions or comments can be directed to llysoby@nchech.org or 888-624-3248, extension 13.

The completion of the National Health Educator Competencies Update Project is a true milestone in the field of health education. Now there are many exciting challenges and opportunities for NCHEC and for the profession as we continue to explore and define the impact of the findings on professional preparation, credentialing and professional development of health educators.



Photographs (top to bottom) from the Third National Congress for Institutions Preparing Health Educators: Linking Program Assessment Accountability and Improvement which was held February 23-25, 2006 in Dallas Texas.

1. Speakers for a plenary session "Health Education on the Move," were Ellen Wert (TEAC), Audrey Gotsch (CEPH), Kathleen Hillman (NCATE), Mary Hawkins (SABPAC), Matthew Adeyanju (NCHEC), Gary Gilmore (CUP), and Kathleen Miner (moderator).
2. Gary Gilmore (left) and Larry Olsen (right) accept certificates of appreciation on behalf of the CUP Steering Committee presented by Matthew Adeyanju (center).
3. The executive directors of the three organizations that share the copyright to the Competency Update Project findings share a moment at the meeting: Linda Lysoy (NCHEC), Becky Smith (AAHE), and Elaine Auld (SOPHE).
4. Beverly Saxon Mahoney and Kelly Wilson lead an interactive workshop entitled "Impact of CUP Findings on Entry-Level Professional Preparation and Professional Development."
5. Presenters Michael Perlin and Carol Cox, and moderator Judith Luebke participate in a concurrent session, "Certification as a Quality Assurance Mechanism for Programs."
6. Dixie Dennis (center) leads a roundtable discussion about the possibility of an advanced certification in health education.
7. Session moderator Ellen Capwell encourages dialogue in an interaction session, "Impact of CUP Findings on Entry-Level Professional Preparation and Professional Development."
8. The presenters of the closing plenary, "Eyes on the Prize: Addressing Accreditation Back Home," M. Carmen Sigler, Jeffrey Brandon, John Bonaguro, and David Birch listen as Kathleen Roe gives parting instructions to attendees.