

What is a health education specialist?



Society for Public Health Education

Health education specialists (health educators) teach people about behaviors that promote wellness. They develop and implement strategies to improve the health of individuals and communities.

Health educators:

- **Assess** the health needs of the people and communities they serve.
- **Develop** programs, materials and events to teach people about health topics.
- **Evaluate** the effectiveness of programs and educational materials.
- **Help** people find health services or information.
- **Provide** training programs for community health workers or other health professionals.
- **Supervise** staff who implement health education programs.
- **Collect and analyze** data to learn about a particular community to improve programs and services.
- **Advocate** for improved health resources and policies that promote health.



A **Certified Health Education Specialist** is an individual with the certified health education specialist (CHES®) designation that has met requirements, eligibility and successfully passed a competency-based examination demonstrating skill and knowledge of the *Seven Areas of Responsibility of Health Education Specialists*. Master's level of certification (MCHES®) includes advanced eligibility requirements.

Certification is provided by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing. CHES® and MCHES® require an ongoing commitment to continuing education.



Health education specialists work in:

- Healthcare facilities with patients and their families to share knowledge of diagnosis, treatment, procedures and resources.
- Colleges to create programs and materials, train students for peer education and advocate policy.
- Public health departments with communities to prevent, detect and treat chronic and infectious diseases; provide safety information during emergencies and develop education materials.
- Nonprofit organizations advocating for health education and health promotion.
- Private businesses with employees to adopt healthy behaviors.



What's the difference? Health educators vs. community health workers

Health educators often work with community health workers—each with their own responsibilities. Health educators need a bachelor's degree and many employers require a CHES® credential.

The requirements for community health workers varies—typically a high school diploma is required and completion of on-the-job training. Health educators often supervise community health workers.

U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics 21-1091 Health Educators

Health education specialists improve the health status of people and communities, and enhance the quality of life for all.