NCHEC Achieves Accreditation from the International Accreditation Service (IAS)

The National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc. (NCHEC) earned accreditation as a Personnel Certification Body by the International Accreditation Service (IAS). Accreditation provides a global benchmark for personnel certification programs to ensure consistent, comparable and reliable operations worldwide.

The IAS accreditation program for Personnel Certification Bodies is based on ISO/IEC Standard 17024:2012 Conformity Assessment — general requirements for bodies operating certification of persons.

“We are very proud of our latest accreditation in addition to the NCCA accreditation already achieved. We will continue to strive for recognition as a premier credentialing organization,” said Linda Lysoby, MS, MCHES, CAE, NCHEC Executive Director. “Having IAS accreditation to Standard 17024:2012 plus NCCA accreditation distinguishes our certification organization to health education/promotion specialists, their employers, and other stakeholders.”

A recognized accreditation body since 1975, IAS is a nonprofit, public benefit corporation. IAS is one of the leading accreditation bodies in the United States and a signatory to several international mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs). In addition to NCHEC, IAS accredits more than 800 organizations. For more information about the IAS accreditation program for Personnel Certification Bodies, visit http://www.iasonline.org/.

Established in 1988, NCHEC is the only accredited U.S. certifying agency for the health education/promotion industry. NCHEC is a highly recognized and well respected credentialing organization administering two professional credentialing programs including the Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES), designed for entry-level health education specialists, and the Master Certified Health Education Specialist (MCHES), targeted to advanced-level practitioners. In addition to ISO 17024 accreditation, the CHES and MCHES programs maintain third-party accreditation from the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). For more information about NCHEC’s certification programs, visit www.nchec.org.

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The five separate fingers are five independent units. Close them, and the fist multiplies. This is organization.

— James Cash Penney,
(Founder of the retail chain, JC Penney's)

In addition to monthly conference calls among the 11 members of the NCHEC Board of Commissioners (BOC), along with the NCHEC Executive Director and Deputy Director, the BOC meets annually in a face-to-face meeting for two and half days at the NCHEC headquarters in Whitehall, PA. At these face-to-face meetings, several commissioners meet each other in person for the first time. Commissioners come from different health education work settings, areas of the country, and represent varying ages, races, education, gender, as well as different ideas and values, which makes for a better team. According to Katherine Phillips (2014), being around people who are different makes groups more creative, more diligent, and harder working and, thereby, able to better form conclusions. This May, the BOC convened as 11 independent units and worked together to make a better organization as they participated in discussions “to enhance the professional practice of health education by promoting and sustaining a credentialed body of Health Education Specialists,” adhering to the NCHEC mission statement.

The NCHEC BOC face-to-face meeting began May 15th with the NCHEC Executive Director and staff reports. Next, commissioners heard and approved reports from each of the NCHEC Division Boards: Professional Preparation and Practice, Professional Development, and Certified Health Education Specialists. The remainder of that day, and all day Saturday and half a day on Sunday, Commissioners were busy reviewing the NCHEC Strategic Plan objectives (http://www.nchec.org/strategic-plan), centered mostly around two Strategic Plan goals: enhance and support the quality of NCHEC certification program and strengthen NCHEC infrastructure required to accomplish its vision and mission. The 2015-2019 NCHEC Strategic Plan guides all the activities of the organization. Specific to Goal 3: Enhance and support the quality of NCHEC certification program, the following objectives and activities were discussed at great length and actions were taken as appropriate:

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NCHEC Receives Global Accreditation

Executive Director Report - Linda Lysoby, MS, MCHES, CAE

It is with great pride and satisfaction that staff and the Board of Commissioners issued the press release (see page 1) stating NCHEC has been recognized by a second accrediting body. Just as the CHES and MCHES designations are indications of quality at the individual level, third party accreditation attests to the quality assurance mechanism available for the processes used in certification organizations. NCHEC continues to strive for recognition as a premier credentialing organization and has committed to aligning all processes with recognized certification industry standards. Now, having IAS accreditation as a Personnel Certification Body to the ISO Standard 17024, Conformity Assessment- General Requirement for Bodies Operating Certification of Persons, in addition to our existing National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) accreditation of the CHES and MCHES further distinguishes our certification organization to health education/promotion specialists, their employers, and other stakeholders.

The decision to seek an additional level of accreditation was made for several reasons. The ISO Standard 17024 is recognized internationally. Therefore it adds credence to existing CHES/MCHES who work in global health initiatives and settings. Also, the international recognition may make the credential more appealing to those from other countries as the ISO standards generally are widely recognized worldwide while the NCCA accreditation is the recognized standard in the US. The process of ISO 17024 accreditation has similarities to the certification standards of the NCCA accreditation and, in addition, requires an on-site audit of records plus the creation and commitment to quality Improvement Initiatives. Going through the accreditation process facilitated NCHEC staff and boards to again evaluate, reflect upon and improve upon our existing processes.

NCCA and ISO 17024 accreditation both include standards regarding:
• Role delineation or job analysis as the basis of the certification
• Linking exam to the identified body of knowledge
• Reliability and validity based on psychometric methods
• Minimum pass score set
• Public posting of certification eligibility, processes and scoring methods.

As the market seems to be flooded with new opportunities for certifications, it becomes increasingly important to recognize that there are standards in certifications that can be affirmed by third party accreditation. Those who have earned the CHES/MCHES can proudly affirm that these certification have met national and international standards in credentialing. Please help us to share the good news about the quality of the CHES/MCHES certification process.
The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) of 2010 created a roadmap for exciting new opportunities in primary prevention and chronic disease management service delivery systems. With their distinct knowledge, skills and training, health education specialists are well positioned to contribute to ACA’s goals of improving quality, controlling health care costs, and improved population health. However, challenges exist in terms of widespread recognition of the health education specialist as a distinct occupational classification and their capacities. Increased recognition and integration of health education specialists by public and private organizations can maximize opportunities for public health improvement.

On May 21, 2015, a dozen leaders from the Society of Public Health Education (SOPHE), the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing (NCHEC), and the American Public Health Association’s Public Health Education & Health Promotion Section (APHA-PHEHP) met in Washington, DC to examine the major challenges of advancing health education specialists (HES) in ACA implementation. The HES/ACA Task Force discussed current trends and evolving environments affecting health education specialists in ACA and agreed on the need to: 1) improve understanding by the public and public decision makers about the knowledge and skills of health education specialists; 2) enhance communication around the function and value of a certified health education specialist (CHES) and master certified health education specialist (MCHES) to influence quality and visibility of the profession; and 3) articulate strategies that are needed by the health education profession to strengthen health education specialists’ abilities in ACA implementation.

During the meeting, the leaders discussed broad needs in terms of research, marketing/communications, advocacy, training, education, and payment models and brainstormed potential action steps.

Using a modified Delphi process, the HES/ACA Task Force identified priorities for the foundation of a strategic framework for the health education profession:
- Strengthen linkages to the Community Health Worker (CHW) community, emphasizing the complimentary roles of health education specialists and CHWs.

Several efforts are already underway to contribute to these goals such as a proposed APHA resolution on the role of health education specialists in ACA, which will be voted on in November 2015. In addition, several sessions are planned at APHA’s 2015 Annual Meeting that will feature organizational spokespersons from key public/private groups to educate about health education specialists.

Other short-term action steps will focus on enhancing communications/marketing materials, including: 1) updating the existing ACA issue brief published by SOPHE in April 2013; 2) developing specialized fact sheets on how health education specialists, including CHES/ MCHES, are working in health care, communities, worksites and other settings; and 3) gathering specific stories and examples from health education specialists in the field that can be featured in marketing and communication materials and media.

Under the coordination of SOPHE, The HES/ACA Task Force will continue meeting via monthly calls, and provide updates to their members, chapters/affiliates as well as the Coalition of National Health Education Organizations. Additional expertise will be invited as discussions and efforts evolve. For additional information, contact info@sophe.org.

**HES/ACA Task Force**

**APHA Public Health Education & Health Promotion Section**
J. Henry Montes, MPH, Chair, APHAPHEHP Section
Angela Mickalide, PhD, MPH, MCHES, former Chair, APHAPHEHP Section

**National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc:**
Dixie Dennis, PhD, MCHES, FAAHE, Board of Commissioner’s Chair
Linda Lysoby, MA, MCHES, CAE, Executive Director
Chesley Cheatham, MEd, MCHES, Commissioner, Division Board for Professional Development
Melissa Opp, MCHES, Deputy Executive Director

**Society for Public Health Education, Inc:**
Sandy Bulmer, PhD, SOPHE President
M. Elaine Auld, MPH, MCHES, Chief Executive Officer
Cherylee Sherry, MPH, Treasurer
Amy Thompson, PhD, MCHES, Trustee, Advocacy & Policy Committee
Jeff Goodman, MPH, PhD(c), Chair, Advocacy & Policy Committee
Cicily Hampton, PhD, Director of Health Policy
Melanie Wells, MPH, Assistant Chief Executive Officer (Facilitator)
Making Your CHES/MCHES Certification Work for You

Written by: Nancy Clifton-Hawkins, MPH, MCHES

I can remember when I was in graduate school; it was drilled into us that upon completion we could take the CHES exam and that would essentially be our proof that we had a certain set of skills that would help us solidify our standing among others in the field of health education. We are all responsible for creating our future. Take your talents. More importantly, these are tips that you can use to help us solidify our standing among others in the field of health education. We are all responsible for creating our future. Take your talents.

In fact, our entire health education/promotion course work was modeled after the Seven Areas of Responsibility for CHES and because of that, taking the test would be a cake walk. So I did it. I signed up and took the exam during the fall just after graduation. It was fun; I passed it and felt more than prepared to jump into the job market. Then reality settled in. Granted the CHES certification had not yet attained puberty, and as a result, not every employer knew what a CHES was and the benefits of hiring one. So I had to get creative and find ways to promote my CHES certification as a way to get into job interviews, secure a job and then promote the certification once I was working. Which, by-the-way, I continued to use after my first public health job and well into the time I was working as a health education specialist in private practice.

The following are some ideas that you should use to help give you a leg up on that next job search, job promotion, or simply showing off your talents. More importantly, these are tips that you can use to help us solidify our standing among others in the field of health education. We are all responsible for creating our future. Take some of the ideas, from each of the categories, and make that critical step in ensuring our certification gains value over time and works for all us.

First Step—Focus On Yourself:

- Include your credentials on your name badge.
- Display your certificate in your unit or office.
- Suggest your employer proudly display a plaque with the names of certified health education specialists at your institution/organization.
- Include your credential every time you sign your name in a professional capacity and print your credential on your business card, CV, and other professional materials.
- Wear your CHES/MCHES pin!!!!!

Next—Focus On Yourself and Others Nearby You:

- Use the NCHEC marketing materials that respond to, “What is a Health Education Specialist?” Share it with your colleagues, anyone to whom you provide health education specialist services, and encourage other CHES/MCHES to do the same.
- As a certified health education specialist your knowledge has been validated so offer to develop or teach in-service programs, revise health education guidelines, or patient education materials.
- Volunteer to serve on committees that are multi-disciplinary. This way you can demonstrate the value a CHES/MCHES can bring to a team.
- Encourage certification among your peers by arranging a study group or teaching a portion of a review course.
- Volunteer to speak at SOPHE/APHA where you can show off your CHES/MCHES prowess in contributing to the research and experiences in the field. Make sure you have CHES or MCHES along with any other credentials listed on the authorship lines.
- Participate in SOPHE chapter activities to meet and engage with other certified health education specialists in your community.
- Pursue leadership positions in professional organizations like NCHEC. Keep your employer informed about your activities and how the skills you develop will benefit your institution.

Lastly—Focus on Making a Future for CHES/MCHES for Yourself and Others in Our Field:

- Give your employer a copy of your certificate for your personnel file and try to negotiate for support of certification in your benefit package.
- Work with your employer’s HR department to require CHES/MCHES certification as a requirement to hold a Health Education Specialist position.
- Give your employer’s public relations department the press release announcing your certification. Ask them to send it to local newspapers or send it yourself.
- Document instances when certification has had an impact on the people you have worked with, a decision you have made, or leadership you have demonstrated, and share it with your employer.
- Create a portfolio of your accomplishments to share with your employer or potential employer.
- Update your resume or curriculum vitae to reflect your certified health education specialist status.

Tell a colleague or student that the 2016 CHES and MCHES Exam Dates are April 23rd and October 15th, 2016.

For more information, visit www.nchec.org or contact the Exam Coordinator: 888-624-3248, ext 12
High Scorer on the April 2015 MCHES Exam

Tiffany Neal, MPH, MCHES, is a health educator with the Virginia Department of Health in Charlottesville. She leads a grant-funded outreach project to increase the enrollment in WIC (Women, Infants, and Children). She loves the combination of program planning, social marketing, and community outreach. She also chairs the planning committee for the Move2Health campaign, which aims to reduce obesity in the Charlottesville area. Her passion for health education developed while earning her MPH in Health and Social Behavior at UC Berkeley, and during an internship at the CDC designing materials to prevent MRSA. She worked in student health for several years after graduation, managing a variety of projects in sexual health, mental health, and nutrition. After UC Berkeley, she took a position in patient education with Kaiser Permanente. In addition to curriculum development and group facilitation, she enjoyed training fellow employees on motivational interviewing and behavior change.

“I took the MCHES exam as a concrete step in career development. After several years working part-time while raising my young children, I wanted to refresh my health education skills and demonstrate my commitment to the field. Studying for the exam was energizing, and I was excited to see how applicable the content was to my current work. I look forward to continued professional development now that I have the MCHES credential.”

LEADERSHIP NEWS continued from page 2

- 3.1: Create an implementation strategy to covert NCHEC exams to computer-based testing
- 3.3: Maintain existing, and seek additional, accreditation
- 3.6: Align the CHES an MCHES exams with the 2015 Health Education Specialist Practice Analysis (HESPA)
- 3.7: Develop, implement, and sustain a quality assurance process for continuing education offerings to align with the current Areas of Responsibility
- 3.8: Investigate alternative models of renewal

Specific to Goal 4: strengthen NCHEC infrastructure required to accomplish its vision and mission, the following objectives also were a great part of the discussion and action:
- Ensure ongoing financial stability of NCHEC
- Enhance ongoing board development
- Establish a process to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of NCHEC’s Strategic Plan
- Demonstrate tangible impacts that NCHEC has on its contributions to the health education field by conducting and publishing relevant research

Discussions about the four Strategic Plan goals will continue via conference call until the 2016 face-to-face meeting where 11 Commissioners will convene again in Pennsylvania. This diverse group will continue to work as a team to give health education specialists and their certification our best efforts.

The following is a list of those who earned the distinct title of Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) in the April 2014 examination. NCHEC welcomes them to a class of more than 10,500 active CHES. Those who opted not to be published are excluded from the list.
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important resources within the field of community health. Enhances the credibility of physical therapists and distinguishes us as capable practitioners who play a crucial role in improving the lives of people with disabilities. To assess needs, plan, deliver and evaluate health education programs, physical therapists take on an active role in their own wellness. The ability to empower others to play a more active role in their own wellness. This ability to assess needs, plan, deliver and evaluate health education programs enhances our capacity to improve the lives of people with disabilities and enables each of us to reach our full potential. Obtaining this certification enhances the credibility of physical therapists and distinguishes us as important resources within the field of community health.

High Scorer on the April 2015 CHES Exam

Rose M. Pignataro, PhD, CHES is an assistant professor at Florida Gulf Coast University, College of Health Professions and Social Work. A native New Yorker, she earned a bachelor’s in physical therapy at Hunter College and a master’s in health technology and education and a doctorate in physical therapy at Stony Brook University. While in clinical practice as a certified wound care specialist, Dr. Pignataro developed a strong passion for prevention and wellness, and went on to complete a PhD at West Virginia University, School of Public Health. This culminated in dissertation research and an ongoing agenda focused on reducing the prevalence of tobacco use, particularly among people with physical disabilities. In addition to teaching and research, she continues to provide direct patient care as a member of the staff at Robert Volski and Associates Physical Therapy in Fort Myers, Florida.

I took the CHES exam to increase recognition of the physical therapist’s role in community health education and the impact we can have in empowering others to play a more active role in their own wellness. The ability to assess needs, plan, deliver and evaluate health education programs enhances our capacity to improve the lives of people with disabilities and enables each of us to reach our full potential. Obtaining this certification enhances the credibility of physical therapists and distinguishes us as important resources within the field of community health.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH YOUR NCHEC CERTIFICATION?

Michelle Gifford MS, CHES Assistant Wellness Director, Student Wellness

NCHEC staff met Michelle at a recent national health conference. Michelle visited the NCHEC exhibit booth and shared how the CHES credential has benefited her as the Assistant Wellness Director.

I am proud to say that I’ve been CHES for 4 years now! I am grateful for the professional opportunities that I have been presented with because of the experience, knowledge, and networking occasions that I have gained by being CHES. I am confident to say that earning the certification as CHES has not only added credibility to my role as a health educator, but also shines a positive light on my employer. Companies want to employ individuals who have the right experience and knowledge in the health and wellness industry in order to implement positive changes and create a sustainable culture of wellness in the work environment. The NCHEC website has allowed me to network with fellow health educators and has provided many opportunities to pursue continuing education and the ability to join a number of committees which have enhanced my experience as a CHES.

Brief description of my work: Currently, I work in higher education as the assistant wellness director at a public university. I collaborate frequently with a large number of departments on campus for programming purposes. The wellness department is small, just me and an intern. I lead all of the wellness programming for students on campus as well as the creation of campus health education materials. There are a number of projects that I’ve been a part of, specifically working with our Dean of Students Office and the Title IX Initiative. I also work closely with multiple community partners value those relationships because we truly believe it is a collaborative effort to create a culture of wellness on and off campus.

1) What motivated you to earn your CHES/MCHES credential? I really wanted to enhance my credibility in the health education/promotion field, and set myself apart from other health educators in the industry. My goal was also to become part of an organization that was dedicated to the health education field. A colleague of mine was already CHES and I felt that it was necessary to obtain mine in order to become more marketable in the field. I am so glad that I did!

2) How has being certified helped you professionally? It has done wonders for me. It really has added to my credibility in the field and I’ve noticed that more and more companies are adding "CHES" as a "preferred qualification". I know that being CHES certified has set me apart from other individuals with the same degree credentials and possibly job experience, but once they see that I’m CHES, it really does add that extra advantage over other people who don’t have their certification yet.

3) What have you gained from being certified? I have gained many opportunities from being certified. One would be an increase in pay. Employers look favorably upon CHES certification and consider it to be an advancement in the field, which not only adds credibility to us as educators, but to the company as well. In one position I held, the company was very proud that there were CHES on staff as it reflects the department in a more favorable manner. Employers see CHES as an investment. Another opportunity would be the opportunity to teach on several different health-related topics as opposed to just sticking to one or two areas of expertise.

4) How has the organization in which you work benefited from you being a CHES? I believe this organization has benefited in a number of ways. One would be adding credibility to the role that I currently hold, being a CHES, because it adds to the versatility of teaching and programming for a number of health-related topics and issues. I also believe that I serve as a mentor to those students who are studying health promotion and education. Many of them come talk to me, asking for guidance, about what they should do after they’ve earned their degree. I take this opportunity to tell them about CHES and how important it is for them get certified in this job market. Last, by being a CHES, my employer knows that I have the knowledge and ability to plan effective programs for a specific population and that I will evaluate programs and interpret data to identify areas that may need improvement for future planning purposes.

If you would like to share what you are doing with your CHES/MCHES credential and how it is benefiting your employers, please email Melissa Opp at mopp@nchec.org.

ATTENTION CHES/MCHES

The 2016 NCHEC Leadership Election is now OPEN!

Your input is very important
so VOTE TODAY!

Vote for the 2016 NCHEC Board Members online by SEPTEMBER 30, 2015

HOW TO VOTE:
NCHEC is using the Votenet online voting system again this year.

To cast your vote please
visit http://eballot4.votenet.com/NCHEC
(Your username and password will be the same as your username and password for www.nchec.org)
For assistance or to request a paper ballot
call 888-624-3248 or nchec@nchec.org
CHES/MCHES Certification: Building Value in My Community

As CHES and MCHES certified health education and promotion specialist, you are invested in your communities—your personal community as well as the one in which you work. Research confirms you value certification and are dedicated to improving the communities in which you are key members and contributors.

NCHEC is committed to promoting the value of certification to certificants, employers and other practitioners who are not yet certified. Promoting the value of certification helps solidify the important role credentials play in demonstrating specialists have the knowledge and skill necessary to successfully perform the most essential and frequently used aspects of the job.

CHES and MCHES credential holders now have the chance to contribute to the job of promoting certification by sharing their passion for certification and dedication to the field.

NCHEC is sponsoring a new essay contest titled, “CHES/MCHES Certification: Building Value in My Community” and we want your participation. Submit an essay of approximately 250 – 750 words (which is about half a page to one and a half pages) talking about why you earned certification and what value it brings to you and your community. The NCHEC Marketing Committee will select one first-prize winner who will receive a $100 Amazon gift card. The Committee also will select an honorable mention prize winner who will receive a $25 Amazon gift card. NCHEC will recognize the selected essays on our Web site and through social media outlets including the LinkedIn page and Facebook group.

NCHEC knows the individuals who hold the CHES and MCHES credentials are dedicated to their field and their career. This contest gives you the chance to share your passion with your colleagues and leaders in the field.

The essay contest officially opens on September 1st and submissions are due by November 1st. NCHEC will announce the winners in early 2016. Stay tuned to your email and the NCHEC LinkedIn Group and Facebook page for more detailed information or contact nchec@nchec.org.

Thinking about what your essay will say? Start answering these questions to generate some ideas.

- Why did you become a health education specialist?
- Why did you decide to earn the CHES or MCHES?
- How does certification benefit you, personally and/or professionally?
- How does certification benefit the public? Your employer? Other professionals?
- How important is it for you to be part of the CHES and MCHES community?
- What advice would you give someone thinking about CHES or MCHES certification?
- What is your vision for the CHES and MCHES credentials for the next 10 years?
- What is the value of certification to you?

NEW HESPA PUBLICATIONS

Recommended for use in preparation for the revised MCHES exam effective April 2016 and revised CHES exam effective October 2016

A Competency–Based Framework for Health Education Specialist – 2015 .......................................................... $ 70.00

The Health Education Specialist: A Companion Guide for Professional Excellence, 7th Edition .................. $ 60.00

2015 Book Package (*Save $10 includes the Companion Guide 7th edition and 2015 Framework) ............... $120.00

For more information about the HESPA study visit: http://www.nchec.org/health-educator-job-analysis-projects
National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc.
1541 Alta Drive, Suite 303
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Phone: (888) 624-3248
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