

Adapted from the New York State Coalition for Health Education

**EXCITING CAREERS
IN HEALTH**

É *Corporate Wellness*

É *School Health Education*

É *College/University
Health Education*

É *Occupational Health
Education*

É *Patient/Consumer
Health Education*

É *Community Health
Education and Health
Promotion*

É *International Health
Education and Health
Promotion*

WHAT IS HEALTH EDUCATION?

Health education is an exciting and growing profession that can lead to jobs all over the world in public health agencies, voluntary nonprofit organizations, schools/colleges/universities, medical care settings, business/industry and more!

Health education is a social science that draws from the biological, environmental, psychological, social, physical and medical sciences to promote health and prevent disease, disability and premature death.

Health education positively influences the health behavior of individuals as well as the living and working conditions that influence their health.

Health education requires intensive specialized study. Members of the profession may belong to a health education professional organization and are committed to a professional code of ethics.

Health education can include health promotion, wellness, health consumerism, and patient education.

IS HEALTH EDUCATION IMPORTANT?

Yes! Health education improves the health status of individuals, families, communities, the state, and the nation.

It improves the quality of life for all people.

It saves lives and reduces premature deaths.

By focusing on prevention, it saves society money that individuals, employers, families, insurance companies, medical facilities, communities, the state and the nation would spend on medical treatment.

WHAT TRAINING DO I NEED FOR A HEALTH EDUCATION CAREER?

Training

Over 250 colleges and universities in the US offer undergraduate BA or BS degrees in health education or similarly titled majors to prepare students for health education careers, or graduate study.

Many colleges and universities offer master degree programs (MA, MS or MEd degrees) in school or community health education, health promotion and other related titles. About two dozen schools of public health offer master of public health (MPH) programs with community health education concentrations. Doctoral degrees (PhD, EdD, or DrPH) in health education or similarly titled programs also are available across the country.

Degree programs may be accredited by the National Council on the Accreditation of Teacher Education, the Council on Education in Public Health and/or the Society for Public Health Education and the Association for the Advancement of Health Education (SOPHE/AAHE) Baccalaureate Program Approval Committee.

Individual Certification

Health education teachers are certified by individual states.

Nationally, credentialing as a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) is available by examination from the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc. (610-264-8200).

WHERE WOULD I WORK AND WHAT WOULD I DO?

- ***In schools (K-12) - serving students, teachers, school personnel, and parents (guardians)***

- ***In colleges/universities - serving students***

In schools you may teach health education and promote and implement comprehensive school health programming, including student, staff and parent health education, and promote healthy school environments and school-community partnerships.

At the school district level you may develop education methods and materials; coordinate, promote, and evaluate programs; and write grants for funding.

Working on a college/university campus you may be part of a team working to create an environment in which students feel empowered to make healthy choices. You may identify health education needs; do community organizing; teach whole courses or individual classes; develop mass media campaigns; and train peer educators, counselors, and/or advocates.

In schools and colleges, you may be involved in projects related to community health, consumer health, disease prevention, emotional health, environmental health, family life/sexuality education; first aid, safety (including personal safety) and disaster preparedness; substance abuse prevention, human growth and development, and nutrition.

- ***In workplaces - for employees and their families***

In companies, you may perform or coordinate employee counseling as well as education services, employee health risk appraisals, and health screenings.

Full time or as a consultant, you may design, promote, lead and/or evaluate programs about weight control, hypertension, nutrition, substance abuse prevention, physical fitness, stress management, and smoking cessation; develop educational materials; and write grants for money to support these projects.

You may help companies meet occupational health and safety regulations, work with the media, and find community health resources for employees.

- ***In health care facilities - serving patients, health care consumers, health professionals, other personnel, and community members***

The health education opportunities in health care settings - clinics, hospitals, health maintenance organizations, long-term care institutions, nursing homes, and more - keep growing.

In such settings you may educate patients about medical procedures, operations, services and therapeutic regimens; create activities and incentives to encourage use of services by high risk patients; conduct staff training and consult with other health care providers about behavioral, cultural or social barriers to health; promote self-care; develop activities to improve patient participation in clinical processes; educate individuals to protect, promote or maintain their health and reduce risky behaviors; make appropriate community-based referrals; and write grants to raise program funds.

- ***In community-based organizations/agencies - for clients and community members***

You will work in community-based organizations and government agencies such as public health departments, voluntary non-profit organizations, day care centers, unions, etc. Many local organizations have state, regional, and/or national offices that offer community-focused work.

Community health education is all about helping a community identify its needs, draw upon its problem-solving abilities, and mobilize its resources to develop, promote, implement and evaluate strategies to improve its own health status.

You may be involved in identifying community health needs and their behavioral and environmental causes, community organizing and outreach, grant-writing, coalition building, advocacy, and developing, producing, and evaluating mass media campaigns.

WHERE IN ILLINOIS CAN I STUDY HEALTH EDUCATION?

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