

Credentialing as a CHES



LT ERIN GRIFFITHS, MPH, CHES

Erin.Griffiths@fda.hhs.gov

(301)796-8148



My Background



- I received my MPH with a specialization in Health Behavior and Health Education; received credentialing as a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) in October 2014.
- I waited to receive this certification originally since I had not planned to practice as a Health Educator
- My previous work experience mainly research and quality assurance; currently work in regulatory policy with FDA
- After years of working in public health and joining the U.S. Public Health Service, I determined that it would be a good idea to become credentialed as a health educator to better retain these skills.

My Experience Taking the CHES



- There are a number of testing sites available which made taking the exam very convenient.
- Due to a planned a vacation, I was able to move my testing location to another state with no issues.

Preparing for the CHES



- Variety of study materials offered through the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc. (NCHEC) website
 - Utilized a couple of resources based on information provided on this website.
 - During exam preparation, I found that I was able to recall a number of topics covered when I was working on my MPH.
- Studied and reviewed topics like health education theory, methodology, needs assessment, etc. prior to the exam.
- Took the brief practice test on the NCHEC website which provided a baseline for what I needed to study. Some of the questions on the exam would have been impossible had I not reviewed the material.

Preparing for the CHES



- The amount of time needed to review will vary based on how long it has been since you took the relevant health promotion coursework and the depth of coursework that you have taken in this field.
- I would recommend 2-3 months prior to the exam if you have a good amount of familiarity with the topics. It is good to review practice questions as with any test of this nature.
- There are study groups that are advertised through the NCHEC website, which I did not take advantage of, but these groups would probably have been helpful.

Officership/Professional Enhancement



- Am able to better recall public health competency-related information
- More accountable for keeping current on health promotion and health education information and because of the continuing education credit requirement.
 - Felt more engaged in the USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium as the need to get my CE's made me more motivated to attend various break out sessions, which helps me as an officer and professional.
- Am able to focus web based courses for CE on those topics that interest me which is helpful both personally and professionally.

Taking the CHES



- Recent email provided information on reimbursement for licensing and certification exams, which include the CHES/MCHES through the VA.
- http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/licensing_certification.asp