

# Health Behavior + Health Education

Those in the field of **health behavior and health education** have one mission: to improve the public's health by promoting healthy behaviors. In other words, they encourage people to make healthy choices in their lives through research and education. There are different ways in which health behavior and health education professionals do this. Health behavioral scientists seek to understand why harmful health-related behaviors and attitudes exist by conducting research. Health educators work to change policy and behaviors affecting health by working closely with the communities in which they serve through education, counseling and organizing community events.

Examples of work in this field might include organizing a media campaign aimed at reducing incidence of teen pregnancy; conducting a study to understand the effects of alcohol on human behavior; masterminding a coalition of lobbyists to secure funding for a family violence prevention program.



## DID YOU KNOW?

According to the NC State Center for Health Statistics, there were 19,615 reported pregnancies to NC girls between the ages of 15 and 19 in 2007.



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## Specialization

mental health, aging-related health issues, health promotion and disease prevention, public health practice, health education and behavior change, disability and health, social research, communication theory and health media and much more

## Work Environment

Local, state, and federal health agencies, schools, college/university campuses, research institutions, community or voluntary organizations and much more

## Education Requirements

The minimum requirement is a bachelor's degree in health education/promotion, public health, or community health, however for the most opportunities in the field, a masters degree in public health is strongly encouraged. Those from related undergraduate backgrounds like psychology, sociology, anthropology, health communications and geography can also seek a graduate degree in health behavior and health education. Graduates seeking to be recognized as certified health education specialists (CHES) must pass a certification examination.

## Potential Career Opportunities

Public Health Educator | Community Health Program Director | Health Services Coordinator  
Local Health Director | Professor | Home Health Educator | Patient Educator  
Behavioral Scientist | Mental Health Researcher | Human Services Worker  
Counselor | Health Communications Specialist

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## Where can I go to study Health Behavior + Health Education?

- Appalachian State University
- East Carolina University
- Elizabeth City State University
- Fayetteville State University
- North Carolina A&T State University
- North Carolina Central University
- North Carolina State University
- University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
- University of North Carolina - Charlotte
- University of North Carolina - Greensboro
- University of North Carolina - Pembroke

