



Colorado Standards and Requirements for CDPHE Voluntary Recognition of Health Navigator Training Programs

1. STATEMENT OF BASIS AND PURPOSE

These standards are to specify procedures relevant to the CDPHE-Recognition of unlicensed health navigator¹ training programs whose graduates shall be eligible to take the Colorado health navigator competency assessment.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Recognition: Acknowledgement that a Health Navigator Training Program meets the standards established by CDPHE.
- 2.2 CDPHE: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.
- 2.3 Competency assessment: The unlicensed health navigator skills test developed by CDPHE through a contract with the Center for Advancing Professional Excellence (CAPE - University of Colorado School of Medicine, Anschutz Campus).
- 2.4 Curriculum: All the content required for completion of CDPHE-Recognized health navigator training program.
- 2.5 CDPHE-Recognized health navigator training program: A course of study that is recognized by CDPHE as meeting standards and requirements as determined by CDPHE.
- 2.6 Interim recognition: Recognition by CDPHE that an established or newly established health navigator training program may admit students and be listed on the Colorado Health Navigator Registry as Interim status.
- 2.7 Full Recognition: Recognition by CDPHE that a health navigator training program meets the standards established by CDPHE.
- 2.8 Health navigator: Also referred to as lay or unlicensed navigator, patient navigator (PN) or resource navigator. A health navigator assists individuals in reducing and eliminating barriers to healthcare access and in negotiating complex health delivery systems. In Colorado, training programs are available to prepare health navigators for this role, ranging from healthcare facility-based, nonprofit community-based organizations, community college programs, online or distant

¹ Health navigator includes patient navigator, resource navigator, lay-navigator, non-licensed navigator, etc., but not licensed providers or lay community health workers.

modalities and university offerings. Health navigators are employed by health delivery systems including primary care, specialty care, managed care as well as local public health agencies.

2.9 Colorado Health Navigator Registry: A list of CDPHE-Recognized health navigator training programs, assessment sites, and individual health navigators maintained by CDPHE. Found at www.colorado.gov/cdphe/health-navigator/registry.

3. INITIAL PROCEDURES FOR CDPHE-RECOGNITION

3.1 Any licensed healthcare facility, independent agency registered with the Colorado Secretary of State, training programs that operate through a fiscal sponsor or accredited educational institution desiring recognition of a Health Navigator Training Program that meet the following criteria:

- A. Must be located in Colorado.
- B. Must submit completed Application for CDPHE-Recognition: Health Navigator Training Program (found at www.colorado.gov/cdphe/health-navigator/training-application) at least 45 days in advance of the first expected class day as a CDPHE-Recognized program.
- C. Designate a program director/coordinator who will be responsible for compliance with CDPHE's curriculum standards.
- D. Listed on Colorado's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (www.colorado.gov/cdle/etpl), OR apply to be on the ETPL within three (3) months of receiving "Full" recognition as a CDPHE-Recognized Health Navigator Training Program. (Access ColoradoETPL.org to begin the process).

3.2 CDPHE is responsible for:

- A. Providing program application forms upon request (www.colorado.gov/cdphe/health-navigator/contacts).
- B. Reviewing program applications within 30 days of the date of receipt of the application and advising the applicant whether the program has met applicable standards for "Interim" recognition.
- C. Requesting any needed additional information from the applicant.
- D. Conducting an initial site visit to determine if all applicable standards have been met.

3.3 Interim approval to admit students as a CDPHE-Recognized program may be granted after CDPHE determines the program to be in substantial compliance with

all applicable requirements, and the status of the program shall be identified as "Interim" recognition on the Colorado Health Navigator Registry.

3.4 Upon receiving the results of the initial site visit and final review, CDPHE may grant full recognition and the status of the program shall be identified as "Full" on the Colorado Health Navigator Registry.

3.5 If "Interim" recognition is denied or withdrawn, the program shall be notified by CDPHE staff by US mail of the program deficiencies and upon issuance of said notice, the program will be removed from the Colorado Health Navigator Registry.

4. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING A TRAINING PROGRAM

4.1 Program Organization and Administration

- A. There shall be a governing body that has the authority to conduct the program, determine general policy and provide adequate financial support.
- B. There shall be an organization plan that demonstrates and describes the relationship of the program to the governing body.
- C. There shall be a program director/coordinator who ensures program compliance with CDPHE standards and who has the authority from the governing body to administer the program in accordance with the policies of the governing body and in relation to:
 - a) Assisting with the development of the budget.
 - b) Initial and ongoing development, implementation and evaluation of the training program.
 - c) Securing and supervising qualified instructors.
 - d) Securing appropriate classroom facilities or distance education technology/venues.
 - e) Developing policies that address a process for determining that a student has sufficient knowledge, understanding and skills to demonstrate the competencies listed in section 5.3A, including a competency checklist for each individual student maintained in the student's record.
 - f) Developing policies for accurate, timely processes to provide verification to CDPHE and to the health navigator competency assessment site(s) that a student voluntarily seeking to take the competency assessment for health navigators has successfully completed the training program.

(1) See diagrams of “Process of an Application to become a CDPHE-Recognized Health Navigator Training Program” and “Process for Attestation of Health Navigator Training and Competency Assessment” found at

www.colorado.gov/cdphe/health-navigator/training-application.

- g) Designing and signing a training certificate as proof of health navigator training for each student who has successfully completed CDPHE-Recognized training, and maintaining a copy in the student’s file. The certificate shall include the student’s name, name of CDPHE-Recognized training program, and the date training was completed.
- h) Reporting to CDPHE, by means established by CDPHE, the number of unlicensed individuals and the aggregate demographics of those individuals who satisfactorily completed the training program within 30 days of program completion.
- i) Developing written policies for admission to, dismissal from, and completion of the training program.
- j) Providing for a systematic plan to evaluate the training program.
- k) Developing training program communication and marketing plan.

5. CURRICULUM

5.1 The curriculum shall be developed, implemented, managed and evaluated by the coordinator and instructors.

5.2 A community advisory council shall be used during the curriculum development period that includes, at minimum, employers of health navigators, experienced health navigators, direct supervisors of health navigators and at least one (1) consumer who represents underserved or marginalized populations that experience health disparities at the local or state level (applicant may state why this composition is not possible).

5.3 The curriculum shall provide:

A. Terminal competencies expected of the student, including but not limited to:

- a) **Ethical, legal and professional issues:** Demonstrates professionalism through adherence to organizational rules and regulations, ethical principles and boundaries of the navigator’s scope of work.

- b) **Health beliefs and behavior:** Understands the impact of individual health beliefs and behavior on health care decisions.
- c) **Psychology of illness:** Integrates knowledge of the social and emotional aspects of health into patient/client, caregiver and family interactions and support.
- d) **Disease-specific knowledge:** Demonstrates basic knowledge of health promotion, disease prevention and common disease care continuums.
- e) **Healthcare system structure and function:** Applies understanding of the healthcare system to improve patient/client care.
- f) **Resources and referral mechanisms and sources:** Identifies and utilizes resources and appropriate referrals to reduce patient/client barriers to care.
- g) **Patient/client assessment:** Conducts effective patient/client interviews to identify needs and strengths of patient/client.
- h) **Patient/client interaction and communication skills:** Establishes a professional relationship with patient/client/family by building trust and communicating in a collaborative manner.
- i) **Work within patient/client healthcare team, patient/client and community agencies:** Demonstrates collaboration within and across the care team, patient/client and community agencies.
- j) **Healthcare team patient/client communication:** Assists in the development and enhancement of appropriate and open communication between the patient/client and the healthcare team.
- k) **Appropriate referral for behavioral health or emergency medical care:** Arranges referrals to behavioral and physical health providers for additional professional support.
- l) **Care coordination:** Accesses, evaluates, and uses appropriate information and resources in designing patient/client-centered care plans.
- m) **Patient/client activation, education and support:** Facilitates the engagement of the patient/client in their health.
- n) **Professionalism and development:** Optimizes practice as a health navigator through continual professional development.

o) **System change:** Seeks to improve systems of care for patient/clients through the identification of systemic barriers and challenges.

p) **Program development and management:** Participates in health navigator program development, improvement and evaluation.

B. A list of the content/topics covered in the training that lead to the terminal competencies.

C. Competencies must be mapped to the curriculum courses/modules.

5.4 The curriculum shall include instruction on:

A. Recognizing and reporting abnormal signs and symptoms of common conditions including mental and oral health.

B. Recognizing and reporting signs and symptoms of domestic violence/abuse, mistreatment and neglect immediately.

C. Understanding trauma-informed care.

6. INSTRUCTORS

6.1 Instructor Qualifications

A. The program instructor/coordinator shall have completed a course on teaching adults or have documented experience in teaching adults.

B. At least one instructor must have experience in working directly with health navigators in a healthcare setting for a minimum of two (2) months prior to entering into an instructor role.

C. Health navigator instructors who have not completed a course on teaching adults or do not have experience teaching adults must co-teach with an instructor who does have teaching experience with adult learners.

D. Instructors without experience in working with or supervising health navigators, must within six (6) months after assuming instructor responsibilities in a health navigator training program complete health navigators course work at a CDPHE-Recognized training program.

7. EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

7.1 Classrooms shall be adequate in size and number for the type of venue offered [e.g., online, Extension for Community Health Outcomes (ECHO), face-to-face]

7.2 Instructional materials shall be provided and be available to students and instructors.

8. CONTINUING CDPHE-RECOGNITION

- 8.1 CDPHE will evaluate renewal applications for continued recognition every three years.
- 8.2 Training programs must submit a renewal application no less than two (2) months prior to the expiration of the current approval period.
- 8.3 Renewal applications are available on the [CDPHE webpage](#).
- 8.4 CDPHE-Recognized Programs must demonstrate that they continue to meet the standards for health navigator curriculum recognition to be continued.
- 8.5 Training programs that fail to timely submit a renewal application must submit a new application and may not apply for renewal of current recognition.
- 8.6 CDPHE or CDPHE's designee may conduct a site visit of the program at any time during the three year recognition period. At minimum, all programs will receive a site visit every three years (3) years. All site visits will evaluate compliance with CDPHE standards.
- 8.7 A report of the CDPHE's site visit findings will be sent to the program director/coordinator with the requirements for the correction of any deficiencies identified during the survey.
- 8.8 CDPHE will evaluate annual status reports from the program.
- 8.9 At minimum, training programs shall report any proposed changes to the curriculum and number of students trained in the three (3) year recognition period to CDPHE.
- 8.10 Programs may make inquiries of CDPHE for the purpose of clarifying the standards of the curriculum when program revisions are being considered.
- 8.11 Programs shall advise CDPHE of any changes to the organization contact information within 30 days of such changes.
- 8.12 Significant changes in the program shall be reported to CDPHE prior to implementation. Significant changes shall be defined to include, but not limited to, changes in:
 - A. Terminal competencies.
 - B. The order and/or composition of curriculum content or mapping of competencies to the curriculum.
 - C. Status of the program (e.g., inactive, closing).

9. WITHDRAWAL OF RECOGNITION

CDPHE shall remove a training program from the public facing registry of CDPHE-Recognized Programs when CDPHE:

- A. Determines deficiencies have not been corrected or when the program requests to be removed from the public-facing list of program.

10. INACTIVE PROGRAMS

10.1 A program may be deemed to be inactive and removed from the public facing list of CDPHE-Recognized programs when:

- A. No trainees have been admitted or are not expected to be admitted for a period of twelve (12) consecutive months; or
- B. A program is determined to have ceased operation, as evidenced by lack of current contact information for the program, its governing body or instructors.

10.2 In order to reactivate a program's CDPHE-Recognition status the program director/coordinator shall submit to a site visit. In addition, the program director/coordinator shall provide the following information to CDPHE or its designee, by not later than fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the date of the scheduled site visit:

- A. Names and qualifications of instructors, if anything has changed since the program became inactive.
- B. Curriculum change to be implemented, if any.
- C. Date of student admission.