



National Institute of Whole Health

Frequently Asked Questions regarding Health Coach Training & the Nationally Accredited, NIWH 3-in-1, 400 hour comprehensive Whole Health Education® training

History of NIWH -

In June of 1976, rudimentary beginnings of a new movement within health care began. The vision of its' founder was to (1) empower individual patient/clients to have an understanding of the “how” and “why” of their chronic health conditions and (2) be able to take control of their health outcomes with informed, evidence-based, yet *demytified* health information.

In 1977, a Whole Health focused curriculum was offered, and informally 12 health care professionals participated in the first cohort of a two (2) year Whole Health Education training. By word of mouth alone, in 1978, thirty three (33) health professional learners signed up for the training.

The program rapidly expanded and in 1980 NIWH began a nine (9) year collaboration with the [Lemuel Shattuck Hospital](#), Out Patient Stress and Pain Clinic, in Boston, Massachusetts to pilot test the Whole Health Education model with inpatient and outpatient populations.

The program grew rapidly, and between [1980 and 2018 many hospital studies](#) were conducted around the country. In 1998, Whole Health Education® was named a Best Practice in Relationship Centered Care by Union Hospital, a Boston area Harvard affiliate hospital, which opened a department of Whole Health Education to empower and serve its out-patient population.

The last study was completed and published in 2018. This study was conducted in collaboration with Michigan State University, College of Human Medicine, and physician practice:

Table 1. Participant Pre-Intervention and Post-Intervention Survey

Excellent Response Scores		
Variable	Excellent Responses (%)	
	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention
Valued	72.5	100.0
Present	80.0	100.0
Listen	65.0	100.0
Whole	70.0	100.0
Understand	80.0	97.5
Eye Contact	70.0	95.0
Positive	80.0	95.0
Explain	75.0	97.5
Take Control	72.5	97.5
Develop Plan	75.0	97.5

In addition to being the only post-professional, ICE nationally accredited program of its kind, [NIWH is endorsed, accredited and approved](#) by the leading healthcare organizations across the country. The leader in patient education, health advocacy and innovator of whole health coaching, NIWH is the 44 year old voice of patient and health advocacy called upon by the major nursing organizations and state nursing groups to provide free webinars for understanding the legal, professional and ethical details as it relates to health professionals use of health coaching.

Nurse graduates may elect to become [Board Certified Nurse Coaches through the American Nursing Association's AHNCC board](#), [Board Certified Holistic Nurses through AHNA](#), [Board certified Patient Advocates through the Patient Advocate Certification Board \(PACBoard\)](#), and can test out for a [National Certification as a Chronic Care Professional with a significant discount, through the HealthSciences Institute, an NIWH Education partner](#). All of the above certifications are elective and are not required for an NIWH graduate to receive their NPI number or liability insurance.

History of Coaching

The term Coaching, utilized outside of the field of sports, was first adapted to the business world and utilized by the [International Coaching Federation](#), founded in 1995. This training focused, and continues to focus, on executive, leadership and life coaching. There are [three credentialing paths](#) to credential with ICF in these areas of coaching:

Associated Certified Coach
Professional Certified Coach
Master Certified Coach

The definition of the Essence of Coaching, as stated by the [International Coaching Community](#) is:

- > Help a person change in the way they wish and help them go in the direction they want to go.
- > Coaching supports a person in becoming who they want to become.
- > Coaching builds awareness, empowers choice and leads to change.

PLEASE NOTE – there is no Health or Wellness Coaching accreditation from the ICF. Only accredited CEUs for certified ICF credentialed coaches.

NIWH is approved for and supports the American Nursing Association's AHNCC national board certification for nurses. NIWH believes in a standard of training and credentialing that is appropriate to work within medicine.

Although NIWH served as a founding board of NCCHWC, NIWH has chosen to not apply for NCCHWC acceptance as NIWH believes the pre-requisites are inadequate for professional success and [recommends AHNCC instead](#).

History of Health Coaching

Until the late-2000's Health Coaching was not part of the health care landscape or language. In 2008, [Dr. Jerold Lamole](#), a renowned cardiac surgeon, who was part of the medical team that performed the first 1968 heart transplant in the United States, invited NIWH to participate in the upcoming initial meetings. As the oldest, post professional program of its kind, NIWH was asked to provide input and share our experience for developing a national organization, as well as creating guidelines for professionally recognized health and wellness credentials.

NIWH was introduced to Dr. Lemole through its affiliation with Health Corps, founded by Dr. Memet Oz. NIWH was providing Whole Health Education training for the HealthCorp interns from 2008- 2014. Healthcorps became [accredited by ICE in 2019](#) and provides a certificate for an eight-hour, assessment-based training that gives participants the tools and techniques needed to facilitate the HealthCorps Whole Health content.

On October 16th of 2009, a meeting to establish a leadership team for the development of a national consortium to credential Wellness Coaches was convened. Distinguished members included:

Dr. Woodie Kessel - Assistant Surgeon General, retired

Dr Gerald Lemole - member of 1968 medical team that performed the first heart transplant in the United States

Dr. Michael Roizen Cleveland Clinic, Chief Wellness Officer

Dr. Mehmet Oz Vice-Chair & Professor of Surgery at Columbia University

Dr. Georgianna Donadio – Director National Institute of Whole Health

Dr. Mark Hyman - UltraWellness Center, Founder & Medical Director

Margaret Moore, MBA -Wellcoaches Corporation, Founder and CEO

Dr. Alan Gass -Westchester Medical Center, Heart Transplantation

Dr. Wayne Jonas - Samueli Institute, President and Chief Executive Officer

The National Institute of Whole Health served on the Board of Directors and on the Council of Advisers from 2009 - until January 2014. NIWH left the consortium in 2014, as NIWH believed a strong foundation in patient health education and patient advocacy was critical to the long term success of an emerging new specialty.

NCCHWC did not wish to have any focus beyond health coaching skills as the central part of an accepted training. In fact, the guidelines state “more than 75% of each [coaching] session is devoted to coaching facilitation and not education.” <https://www.ncchwc.org/individuals/>

NIWH left the consortium because of its commitment to patient health education and health advocacy, which the NCCHWC board did not wish to have included in the definition or function of health coaching.

The NIWH clinical studies evidence that demystified patient health education, which clarifies the *How* and *Why* of a client’s chronic health condition, is critical for clients to understand in enabling them to make ***sustainable changes*** in their lifestyle choices.

The current credentialing pre-requisites, from the NCCHWC website are as stated on their website at: <https://www.ncchwc.org/individuals/>

To apply to sit for the Health & Wellness Coach Certifying Examination, you will need to provide:

- Documentation of an Associate’s degree or higher in ***any*** field. For those who do not have an Associate’s degree, exam candidates will need to provide documentation of 4,000 hours of work experience in ***any*** field. If you have completed an associate degree or higher, please complete the [HWC Education Declaration document](#). [Only] 10% of all exam applicants will be audited and asked to provide a transcript of their highest degree. If you have not completed an associate degree or higher, please complete the [HWC Work Experience document](#).
- A certificate of completion from an Approved Transition Program. If your program has an asterisk next to it, please include documentation of

completion of the additional requirement. If you do not have a certificate of completion from the program you attended, the NCCHWC will contact your program for verification.

Given the lack of substantive pre-requisites for training and certification, interest in Health Coaching has increased significantly over the past 10 years. NIWH, the pioneer of Whole Health since 1977, is the current leading voice for clarifying and educating health professionals on the parameters and realities of training and credentialing for Health Coaching.

For the past 3 years, NIWH has been providing, to the leading national nursing organizations, webinars regarding the topic of health coaching and the professional, legal and ethical parameters around health coaching - both for nurses and other credentialed medical professionals.

The most rigorous and best credentialed board certification for nurse coaches is through the [American Nursing Association](#).

IMPORTANT CURRENT BILLING INFORMATION

There has been considerable reporting regarding the recent assigned Category III CPT® Codes for health coaching utilization. NIWH is partnered with a nationally credentialed medical billing and coding expert who is the former Billing and Coding Compliance Officer of the Harvard Medical School affiliated Boston's Children's hospital. Each year he reviews and updates the content of the NIWH Billing manual, which is provided without cost to program graduates.

Here is the most relevant information, provided by our expert, from the CPT code announcement, as it pertains to legal billing practice:

“The approved Health and Well-Being Coaching Category III CPT® codes will be in effect for five years. These temporary codes are intended to support the utilization and data collection, required for AMA approval of Category 1 codes. Reimbursement by payers of Category III typically waits until codes have been certified as Category I.”

PLEASE NOTE - This takes considerable time, a minimum of 5 years, and if approved for Category I status will likely be utilized under the umbrella of a physician or similarly credentialed medical practitioners. In addition, the amount of reimbursement will reflect the complexity of training and prerequisites and likely to provide a minimal reimbursement to or through a medical physician (or equal status) only, for such health coaching services.

Unlike a health coach, graduates of the NIWH program qualify for healthcare provider status, professional liability, [an NPI number as a patient health educator](#), and receive an expert prepared billing and coding manual.

Latest update from NBCHWC, January 26th newsletter

“As of April, 2021, a taxonomy code for health and wellness coaches has been created. NBCHWC is working to have coaching billed for by physician or medical practices in the next few years. This will require, as with nurses, coaches be assigned an NPI for the billing of their services through the medical practice in which they work.”

As with nurses working in a medical environment, health and wellness coaches will need an NPI number - when the services become approved for medical reimbursement - if they work for a healthcare organization or in partnership with a physician.” [This is still several years from 2021.]

Compare the Difference between Health Coaching and NIWH program

A Whole Health Education professional enjoys a wider range of opportunities than is possible through the current Health Coaching trainings. The chart below shows how they differ and answers the question often ask: “Why become credentialed in the NIWH 3-in-1 Whole Health Education® training, instead of doing a traditional Health Coach training program?”

This is a vital question for anyone pursuing a career in this field to explore. Understanding the difference can have substantial consequences on the services you can provide to your clients, your scope of practice, your professional credentials and your income!

NIWH provides the whole package for success – whether in private practice or in partnership within a medical practice. Billing and Coding expert guidance, practice building, professional networking, and success mentoring are all available to NIWH learners and graduates from initial enrollment to graduation and beyond! All learners, past and present, are part of the Whole Health Family and Community at NIWH and are always welcome to participate in all Whole Health offerings. We want you to succeed!!

In 1998, Whole Health Education® was named a Best Practice in Relationship Centered Care by a Boston area Harvard affiliate hospital, which opened a department of Whole Health Education to empower and serve its out-patient population. Research and utilization of Whole Health Education and BEPP continues today, with a ground-breaking [collaborative research agreement](#) between NIWH and Michigan State University medical school.

“You can’t change old behaviors without new information”

Dr. Georgianna Donadio, Founder NIWH

NIWH Whole Health Education trained Whole Health Coaches come away with much more than traditional health coaching skills, which can aid in transforming poor communication into excellent communication.

They learn urgently needed health information to empower their patients to take control of their health and their lives. They also earn additional provider credentials as a patient health educator, certificates as a [Patient Health Advocate](#) and as a Whole Health Coach.

The following chart is located on the NIWH website at this address:

<https://wholehealtheducation.com/disease-prevention-and-wellness-program/whole-health-programs/compare/>

	Patient Health Education, Patient Advocacy & Whole Health Coaching	Health Coach Training
Definition	Society for Public Health Education says: A Health Educator “promotes, maintains and improves individual and/or community health by assisting individuals and communities [through evidence-based health information] to adopt healthy behaviors.”	International Coaching Federation says: A coach “partners with individuals in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.”
Pre-requisites	NIWH applicants must have a verified professional license or education credentials that meet national standards.	Anyone can call themselves a Health Coach without any training or credentials.
Comprehensive Learning	400 hours which includes evidence-based, whole person focused Patient Health Education, Patient Health Advocacy and Whole Health Coaching skills & training.	Typically 30-60 hours of Coaching skills training which does not include evidence-based patient health education or advocacy training.
The Five Aspects of Health & Disease	Whole Health Education programs provide the Five Aspects of Whole Health™ which delivers demystified patient health information and self-directed disease prevention.	Health Coaching programs do not provide health education course content to address patient health recovery or disease prevention.
Professional Liability Insurance	Whole Health Education graduate is qualified for professional liability insurance as a patient health educator.	Professional liability insurance is not available for health coaches due to the lack of prerequisite requirements.
Health Insurance Billing	Whole Health Education graduate can receive an NPI number as a patient health educator for insurance billing and coding. Medical providers can bill for patient educator’s services.	A health coach training does not qualify an individual for an NPI number or to bill for health coaching services. Medical providers cannot bill for coaching services as these services are not paid for by insurance companies.
Chronic Care Professional Certification	NIWH graduate can test-out for the national Chronic Care Professional Certification, a nationally recognized and endorsed Disease Prevention & Population Health credential.	A health coach certificate alone does not qualify to test-out for the national Chronic Care Professional certification.
Health Care Provider	Credentialed patient health educators are recognized health care providers.	Health coaches are not health care providers.
Use of Billing and Coding Manual	Credentialed Whole Health Educators receive expert-prepared Billing and Coding Manual to provide services and coded receipts for their patients.	Health coaching is not an insurance billable service. Mental health counseling or patient education may be called <i>health coaching</i> by some insurance networks.
Healthcare Specialty	Patient health education is a long-standing regulated and recognized health care specialty. NIWH Whole Health Training is an accredited patient health education program.	Health Coaching is not a professionally accredited specialty. The various health coaching certification program are not regulated or accredited by a national. Only Life, Leadership and Executive Coaching are is regulated by the ICF.
Answers to Patient Questions	Whole Health Education® answers the four most important questions all patients want answers to.	Health Coaching answers only one or two of the important questions all patients want answer to.

In 1980, NIWH developed and researched the first Health Coaching communication model, Behavioral Engagement with Pure Presence (BEPP). BEPP is a component of Whole Health Education – the first actual health coaching model to be developed in the U.S. NIWH is the pioneer of whole person health education model that has been developed and researched in clinical settings. In addition to BEPP, NIWH Whole Health Training provides demystified, whole-person health information which includes both medical and alternative self-care options.

Comment by recent NIWH graduates:

“Coming from a Health Coaching background, I found that there was something missing when trying to assist individuals with making a sustainable behavior change. Through my experience with the program at the National Institute of Whole Health, I was able to identify what that missing piece in Health Coaching was. The courses provided the education needed to be able to supply evidence-based health information to patients, and the case study portion of the program helped facilitate the personal WHY for change in patients. This was the missing piece, that each patient find the “why” they need to change. The program taught me how to assist patients in finding their individual why so that the changes can be sustained for a lifetime.”

Judith Brinn, BS, CHHC, certified in Pediatric Obesity

“September 2015, I completed the NIWH Whole Health Educator program for nurses. This comprehensive program gave me the patient health education knowledge and skills I needed for a more holistic approach to my current practice. Upon completion of the program, I applied for and received my National Provider Identification (NPI) number. The NPI number has opened the door to a population of individuals who had not previously utilized my services. “Being qualified to provide insurance billing and coded receipts has added a new level of credibility to my thriving practice.

Not only does this credential validate all the hard work necessary to earn it, but in addition it provides a distinction from others in the field who do not have a NPI number to better serve their clients.

It [the NIWH program] has been an incredibly rewarding experience for me both personally and professionally. A real game changer!”

Jacqui Bryan, BSN, MS– NIWH Graduate

<http://www.fosters.com/article/20160131/NEWS/160139992>

www.jacquibryan.com

“After receiving my Whole Health Educator credentials through NIWH, I felt completely confident in my skills and training to begin my own pregnancy and fertility Whole Health Education practice and am concurrently working with a Reproductive Endocrinologist’s office.

“Applying for and receiving my National Provider Identification number as a Health Educator was straight-forward and now I accept Flex Spending payments and can be reimbursed for my services when I see patients through local doctor’s offices, making it easier for people to afford and benefit from Whole Health Education. Having an NPI number has given me credibility with doctors and clients and allowed me to open up additional doors and revenue streams.”

Heather Novak, MS in Counseling – NIWH Graduate

“I recently completed the NIWH Whole Health Education programs for Nurses. I found the entire program engaging and motivational. I applied for and received my National Provider Identification number as a health educator. The NPI number allows for free standing clinics to partner and/or contract with me and also receive payment for my services as well as meet the requirement of meaningful use required by the Affordable Care Act. “The NPI number also allows my personal clients to be reimbursed, either partially or fully, by their private insurances or flexible spending plans. This relieves a financial burden for my clients and increases their chances for success through additional sessions.”

Melissa Sperry, BSN, MSN – NIWH Graduate

“The content covered and the amount of knowledge gained throughout the Whole Health Education program is on par with graduate-level programs. The coursework is intensive and thorough. The resources are endless. It was an incredible growing experience that opened my eyes to a new field that merges whole-person healthcare with patient-centered education. This powerful combination creates the potential for sustainable lifestyle change.”

Taylor Worland, M.Ed, Whole Health Educator

***“It's my observation that something is missing in the VA Whole Health program. [The VA adapted the NIWH's Whole Health concept] I have also heard that from colleagues and our health coaches. I truly believe NIWH has what the VA is missing. This program has literally changed my life. I am truly surprised you have not heard of the National Institute of Whole Health. Here is a link you can access for more information.
<https://www.wholehealtheducation.com/about-niwh/>”***

Eileen Foti, BSN, RN, OCN