<https://www.ncsddc.org/our-work/disease-intervention-specialists-dis/dis-certification/final-dis-certification-project-assessment-phase-documents/>



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|   **Greetings from PHAB,**PHAB has been privileged to coordinate a special body of work related to assessing the potential for a national Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS) Certification Program. We were pleased to work closely with the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), the National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSD), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to plan and execute this project.In keeping with PHAB's tradition of publishing special editions of our e-newsletters when we have detailed information on a topic pertinent to public health practice and performance improvement, this e-newsletter is devoted solely to providing an update on DIS certification. In particular, the update highlights accomplishments from the second phase of the project, which was to assess the best model for DIS certification and undertake foundational activities for certification program development. We hope that you will enjoy reading about the important work that DIS do and the contribution that certification can make to their overall performance.Kaye Bender, PhD, RN, FAAN,PHAB President & CEO |

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| Issue #68September 2017 |

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| **In This Issue** |
| [**OVERVIEW OF THE DIS CERTIFICATION PROJECT**](http://#LETTER.BLOCK9) |
| [**KEY PARTNERS IN THE DIS CERTIFICATION PROJECT**](http://#LETTER.BLOCK11) |
| [**PRODUCTS AND DELIVERABLES FROM THE DIS CERTIFICATION PROJECT**](http://#LETTER.BLOCK13) |

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| Kaye Bender, PhD, RN, FAAN President and CEOPHAB                 |

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| **OVERVIEW of the DIS CERTIFICATION PROJECT**Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) have long been a critical part of public health, working directly with communities. Historically, DIS have worked in STD, HIV, and TB programs, but now work in a variety of other disease areas, including other infectious disease outbreak and emergency response where their on-the-ground investigative skills and community engagement play a key role in public health improvement. Many health departments across the country have someone performing DIS job functions. Increasingly, DIS are also needed as patient navigators and networkers to ensure patients are linked to care through expanded relationships with health care providers. DIS are a critical part of the public health infrastructure and in building the link to health care into the future.The goal of certification of the DIS workforce is to improve public health services provided to communities by DIS through a high quality, standardized approach to the professional development of this workforce. Certification can standardize and validate the knowledge, skills, and abilities of DIS; drive the standardization and improvement of training; increase the quality and consistency of service delivery; and increase recognition of the skills and abilities of DIS.In 2013, International Credentialing Associates (ICA) was contracted by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) to conduct a DIS certification feasibility assessment. Based on the feasibility assessment, ICA recommended that CDC pursue the development of a DIS certification. In September 2014, CDC funded the second phase of the national DIS Certification Project, and PHAB became the coordinating organization. This phase of the DIS Certification Project, called the Assessment Phase, was designed to explore and determine the best model for DIS certification and undertake foundational activities for any national certification program, including conducting a job task analysis and enumerating the DIS workforce. The Assessment Phase of the project concluded June 30, 2017. [**Click here**](http://) to view the project deliverables.        |

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| **KEY PARTNERS IN THE DIS CERTIFICATION PROJECT**    In addition to the coordinating partners mentioned earlier, the DIS Certification Project was informed by a National Advisory Committee; subject matter experts; health department representatives, and consultants in the field of certification. Selected special components of the project were also addressed by the National TB Controllers Association (NTCA); by Georgia Southern University Center for Public Health Practice and Research; and by Kathy Vincent and Lee Thielen. Their expertise was invaluable to the success of this project. |

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| **PRODUCTS AND DELIVERABLES FROM THE DIS CERTIFICATION PROJECT**During the Assessment Phase, several products and materials were developed, including:  1.    An [**Executive Summary**](http://) of the Assessment Phase final report to the CDC.2.    A short, animated [**video**](http://) on DIS certification and why it's important.3.    Recorded [**presentation**](http://) with more detailed information about DIS certification.4.    Two fact sheets: One fact sheet about [**DIS certification**](http://) and another fact sheet about what DIS do for their [**communities**](http://).5.    A summary of the formal DIS Job Task Analysis. This is included in [Attachment A](http://) of the Executive Summary of the report.6.    A functional job description template for DIS, which includes instructions for use and information about its connection to the Job Task Analysis. This is included in [Attachment B](http://) of the Executive Summary of the report.7.    A commissioned paper on the future education of the DIS workforce. This area was identified during the project as an important foundational element in supporting DIS in the future. This paper is in the process of being submitted for publication. Stay tuned to PHAB's website for the link when it has been published.8.    A [**commissioned paper**](http://)and related [**appendices**](http://) on the alignment between the program expectations in which DIS work and the PHAB accreditation standards. This was the second foundational element that was identified as supporting the DIS workforce in the future.After all the outstanding work that was completed during the Assessment Phase of the project, a test-based approach to national DIS certification was recommended, and CDC is working on the next steps. The public health field will be kept informed as information becomes available. In the meantime, if you have questions please contact CDC at [**DIScertification@cdc.gov**](http://). |

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