



## NC Child Care Health Consultant Certification Project Update October 2015

**Goal** – The goal of this project is to build the first-in-the nation Child Care Health Consultant Certification (CCHC-C) process to address the need for qualified on-site support for health and safety in child care programs in NC.

**Purpose** - The CCHC-C process will assure Health Departments, local Smart Start Partnerships for Children, Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, and others who employ CCHCs of an ongoing supply of qualified CCHCs whose education, training and experience are vouched for by an independent, professional third party. In turn, credentialed CCHCs will be able to provide the technical assistance that will aid child care programs in keeping the children they care for safe and healthy. The resulting professional certification will be coupled with personal and professional benefits for certified applicants regardless of the place of employment to incentivize application.

**Need** - The number of children served in formal child care settings in the United States has soared over the past several decades. Across the nation more than 61% are in some sort of regular child care arrangement, and half of these (31%) are in out of home care. This rapid rise in the use of formal child care has brought with it an increase in the number of children exposed to illness and injury. The need to support early childhood programs in addressing this new reality resulted in a national call to action yielding the National Health and Safety Performance Standards. These standards recommend that every out-of-home child care program have available the services of a Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC). This standard is supported by recent research<sup>1</sup> demonstrating that CCHCs working on-site with a child care program resulted in a statistically significant increase in the quality of the program's written health and safety policies and health practices and in indicators of children's access to health care.

According to the NC Child Care Health Consultant Association (Association), the state has one of the largest populations of Child Care Health Consultants in the country (n=73). In fiscal year 2013-14, NC CCHCs served 2,334 early care and education facilities received on-site services and provided 8,551 on-site consultations for programs serving 65,695 children. The NC Health & Safety Resource Center (Center), which is operated by UNC-Chapel Hill under contract with the NC Divisions of Public Health and Child Development and Early Education, supports the workforce in gaining the specialized continuing education to layer on to their health education to support their work in the field. Based on Center data, it has been determined that CCHCs are employed in a variety of settings by a variety of employers in 56 of 100 counties in North Carolina, with uneven hiring, field experience, child care knowledge or continuing education requirement.

**Partners** - The [NC Institute for Child Development Professionals](#) (Institute) is leading the one-year process to develop and field-test the first-in-the nation CCHC Certification process. The Institute is partnering with the [UNC-CH Gillings School of Global Public Health](#), the [Center](#), the [NC CCHC Association](#), the [NC Partnership for Children](#) and [Child Care Services Association](#) to build an individual, portable Child Care Health Consultant Certification for health consultant practitioners working with North Carolina child care programs.

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<sup>1</sup> Isbell, ET.AL. *Improvement of Child Care Programs' Health and Safety Policies and Practices, and Children's Access to Health Care, Linked to Child Care Health Consultation*. National Head Start Association Dialog 2013. 16(2), 34-35

## CCHC Certification Project Committee Members

Amy Petersen	NC Child Care Health Consultant Association
Anna Carter	NC Child Care Resource & Referral Council & President, CCSA
Christina DiSalvo	NC Partnership for Children
Debra Torrence	NC Institute for Child Development Professionals
Dr. Jonathan Kotch	UNC-CH Gillings School of Global Public Health
Erin Belford	Child Care Services Association (CCSA), NC Early Educator Certification Unit
Jennifer Kozaczek	NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center
Jeannie Reardon	NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center
Laura Hewitt	NC Division of Child Development and Early Education
Lisa Woolard	Beaufort/Hyde Partnership for Children
Sharon Ware	NC Department of Public Health, Women's & Children's Health Section

**Project Objectives** - The project objectives are to: (1) develop a CCHC Certification process, (2) finalize a CCHC Certification process informed by 10 experts and partners serving on a Project Advisory Committee; (3) support 25 applicants in field-testing the CCHC Certification process; and (4) develop strategies that will sustain the process through the dissemination of information and use of a fee-based CCHC certification process.

### Project Update by Objective (October 2015)

Objective 1. Develop a CCHC-C process.

The CCHC-C process and supporting materials (leveled scale, application and commonly asked question documents) have been drafted.

Objective 2. Finalize the CCHC-C process informed by experts & partners serving on Project Committees.

The CCHC-C process is currently under review by experts and project partners to support a field test in early 2016. It is anticipated that the field-test process will be finalized in December 2015. In addition, outreach to CCHC Association members, consumers of CCHC services

Objective 3. Field-test the CCHC-C process.

The criteria for field-test participants has been outlined to include up to 25 NC CCHC applicants, including one applicant with an international education transcript and one applicant from another state with analogous training. Pilot participant application fees are being partially supported by a private grant from the

Objective 4. Develop and implement systems integration strategies to sustain the CCHC-C process.

A press release was developed and released in NC in July 2015. Discussions with key NC partners have begun and are ongoing to support the use and integration of the CCHC-C. A project summary was posted as a broadcast message from the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Early Care and Education Listserv resulting in responses indicating interest from CCHCS working in 12 states. Meetings and state and national presentations about the CCHC-C are being scheduled in 2016 for key stakeholder groups. Quarterly written and periodic oral updates are also being shared with key partner groups.