NCCHWC
National Consortium for Credentialing Health and Wellness Coaches

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NCCHWC Announces Launch of National Certification
For Professional Health and Wellness Coaches

(BOSTON) -- The official launch of the first national certification for professional health and wellness coaches was announced today by the National Consortium for Credentialing Health and Wellness Coaches (NCCHWC). According to NCCHWC Executive Board spokespersons, “The need for a national standards and certification reduces the confusion in the health care field and public domain around the role, tasks, background and training of competent health and wellness coaches.”

The national certification examination is expected to be available at multiple proctored testing sites throughout the U.S. by late January 2016. Applicants for the national certification may learn about eligibility and prerequisites at the NCCHWC website (www.ncchwc.org) after May 2. The pathway to national certification and education and training standards are published in the peer-reviewed journal Global Advances in Health and Medicine (May 2015 issue) (www.gahmj.com), including a call for comment by the public.

What is involved in launching a national certification?
The best-practices process involved an all-volunteer, collaborative, consensus-building series of summits and teleconferences, involving as many as 70-plus stakeholders over the past five years, to ensure that health and wellness coaches receive a minimum level of knowledge, skills training and practice in a live format, along with assessment of practical skills to ensure basic competence.

BACKGROUND

Need for a National Certification

The need for national standards and certification of health and wellness coaches was driven by three critical factors:
1) Need for Adopting Healthier Lifestyle
The pressing need for individuals to adopt a healthy lifestyle to counter the rising tide of chronic disease and growing US health care costs is the basic driver behind the burgeoning growth of health and wellness coaching. Health and wellness coaches facilitate a client-centered approach in which the clients determine their own goals, use active learning and self-discovery, and practice accountability as they move toward desired outcomes. The coach is a professional trained in evidence-based motivational strategies, behavior change theory and processes, healthy lifestyle knowledge and powerful communication techniques that assist clients (or patients) to develop inner resources and intrinsic motivation for sustaining lifestyle improvement, and health and well-being.

2) Need for Uniform Definition of Health and Wellness Coaching
The NCCHWC estimates that roughly 15,000 to 35,000 people self-identify as health or wellness coaches in the U.S. today. The public, and indeed professionals within the health care system, are confused about the role, tasks, background, and training of a health and wellness coach. These individuals perform diverse practices: some provide health prescriptions and advice rather than coaching methods; some provide education alone; others utilize coaching methods alone.

3) Need for National Standards for Education and Training
Over the past two decades, a variety of training and education methods are available from simple study manuals with online certificates to in-depth hybrid models with both online and live-trainings, to graduate school degrees and certificates. NCCHWC addressed the critical need for a clear standard to be established for education and training.

The public gains a clear benefit from the establishment of national standards because adherence to such standards will ensure that members of the public will work with well trained, knowledgeable, and skillful health coaches. The coaching profession, as a whole, benefits by having a clear and consistent definition of health and wellness coaching, which leads to consistently applied practices. With a uniform definition, rigorous research methodology can ensue to accumulate effectiveness evidence in large-scale trials and further refine best practices which in turn, can inform training and education practices.

Who are Health and Wellness Coaches?

A 2014 NCCHWC industry survey revealed that health and wellness coaches have diverse backgrounds, from nurses, doctors, and psychotherapists to yoga instructors, fitness trainers, human resource employees, and health educators. Many work part-time while pursuing other careers; others have left professions mid-career to pursue options as healthy living advocates.

Highlights of the National Certification Process

In developing the national certification, the NCCHWC followed the established best practices procedure, bringing together national leaders, educators, clinicians and working health and wellness coaches for a series of gatherings and weekly teleconferences over a five-year period.

• Convened a summit in 2010 of approximately 70 stakeholder organizations in medicine, health promotion, nursing, health psychology, coaching, wellness, fitness, and other healthcare disciplines to launch a collaborative and inclusive national process.
• Completed a Job Task Analysis in March 2014 which identified 21 tasks that were consistently performed by working health and wellness coaches, along with a common set of knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish those tasks
• Sent a large-scale validated survey to 4,026 working health and wellness coaches to rate the frequency and importance of each of the identified tasks
• Through the above 3 steps, have thus established a clear and consistent definition of health and wellness coaching
• Convened a second summit in 2014, working with consulting accreditation experts and leading health and wellness coach trainers and educators from private firms, university programs and associations, with the purpose of outlining training and education standards
• Published in the peer-reviewed *Global Advances in Health and Medicine Journal* (May-June 2015) the “National Training and Education Standards for Health and Wellness Coaching: The Path to National Certification”
• Invited public comment for the national certification and education and training standards through July 31, 2015

**History**

NCCHWC started as a founding team in September 2009 and now has grown to a nonprofit legal entity, led by a volunteer Board of Directors, with the support of a Council of Advisors and 70-plus participating stakeholders from the US, UK, Australia, Canada, and Israel.

The Consortium’s mission is to advance the profession of health and wellness coaches by more fully integrating their expertise in mindset and behavioral change into the health care system through a whole-person orientation and an evidence-based coaching approach that focuses on prevention and wellness as well as optimizing health at any stage of illness. For more information, contact Leigh-Ann Webster at lwebster858@gmail.com or mjordan@ciis.edu.

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