

Health educators may be the most misunderstood public health professionals, most people just don't know what they do. A health educator is a non-clinical behavior change expert. What does that mean? Well, they are planners, organizers and promoters of individual and community health and healthy behavior change. Health educators have been changing the face of public health in New Jersey for over 60 years; yet seem to fly under the radar. "In New Jersey health educators are not nurses or social workers, but rather behavior change experts with the skill set to interact with the common man," explained Dr. Laura Taylor, MCHES a health educator with the New Jersey Department of Health. "People think we sit around all day making brochures and handouts and that's not true."

Remember when people smoked in restaurants? The work of health educators in New Jersey can be seen anywhere from your flu shot inoculations, to bio terrorism preparedness and health policy change like new anti-smoking laws. With the help of associations like the New Jersey Society of Public Health Educators (NJSOPHE) and people like Dr. Taylor, health educators have become a necessity not only in health departments, but also in hospitals, schools, and work site wellness programs across the state. To learn more about health educators go to www.njsophe.org a 2012 nationally recognized chapter of excellence.

[Who is my county health educator? \(see listing in NJLMN Library\)](#)