CPH study tips and tricks

Molly M. Eggleston, MPH, CPH, MCHES
Executive Director
National Board of Public Health Examiners

October 6, 2011
The Exam

- Computer based exam
- Proctored testing center
- 200 items
- Approximately 4½ hours to complete

- No calculators or scratch paper allowed
- Receive white board & dry-erase markers
200 Exam Items

All questions are
- multiple choice.
- single-best answer.

Some questions are
- matching items.
- part of a series of questions related to a common vignette.
- based on associated pictorials or charts.
CPH exams draws from Professional competencies

- 150 items from 5 Core Domains
- 50 items from 7 Cross-Cutting Domains

Find at
www.publichealthexam.org
-> Study Resources
What does the exam cover?

**Discipline-specific domains**
1. Biostatistics
2. Environmental Health Sciences
3. Epidemiology
4. Health Policy and Management
5. Social and Behavioral Sciences

**Cross-cutting/interdisciplinary domains**
1. Communication and Informatics
2. Diversity and Culture
3. Leadership
4. Professionalism
5. Program Planning
6. Public Health Biology
7. Systems Thinking
NBPHE contracted with the National Board of Medical Examiners® to develop the exam, including:

- Workshop to train test-item writers – submit by Nov 4, 2011
- Workshop to review and validate pool of items
- Editing and validation of items to assure high quality
- Various approaches to develop metrics that permit a valid and fair examination
CPH exam graded pass/fail

**Performance Report**

Name: Examinee Name

**Total Test Score:** 545
**Decision:** CERTIFIED

This report contains your total test standard score and your certified/not certified outcome obtained on the 2008 Certification Examination. The standard scores were calculated so that the mean and standard deviation for the base reference group were 500 and 100, respectively. The base reference group consisted of first-takers of the 2008 Certification Examination. A total test score of 400 or greater was required to pass the Certification Examination. Additional information on your performance on the total test and the six areas of knowledge covered by the examination is provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>Your Percent Correct Score</th>
<th>Total Group Mean Percent Correct Score (SD)</th>
<th>SEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Test</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>67 (7)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biostatistics</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>81 (5)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Health Science</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>77 (5)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epidemiology</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>79 (4)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Policy and Management</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>82 (7)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Behavioral Sciences</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>80 (7)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-cutting Competencies¹</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78 (8)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹This content area includes communications and informatics, diversity and culture, leadership, program planning and evaluation, professionalism and ethics, public health biology and systems thinking.
## Strong Psychometric Properties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Items Deleted</th>
<th>Mean item Difficulty (P value)</th>
<th>Mean item discrimination</th>
<th>Reliability Coefficient KR20</th>
<th>Pass Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. ASPH MPH competency set
   www.asph.org/publication/MPH_Core_Competency_Model

2. Sample Exam and Exam Software Tutorial Module
   18 sample questions
   Software gives you a sense of the actual exam style
   www.nbphe.org/FAQs.cfm
   www.nbphe.org/documents/SampleExam.pdf
What other study resources are available?

1. ASPH CPH study guide
2. Jones & Bartlett CPH exam quick reference review
3. Public Health Training Center Network
4. TRAIN
5. Alma maters
6. Study groups (Facebook)
Where do I find study resources?
FAQ of www.publichealthexam.org
Information about the CPH exam
Strategies and tips for performing your best on the exam
Chapters on each of the five core public health areas
A chapter reviewing the cross cutting competency areas
A practice test -- self-assessment to identify areas of strength and weakness
Terminology and definitions for each core area and the cross-cutting competencies

$39.99, online
$20 for bulk discount institutions

www.asph.org/cphstudyguide/
Complete review of each of the core competencies
Vignettes that illustrate the application of the concepts
Figures, tables, and references
200 practice-test questions
Interactive flashcards
Interactive glossary
Web links
Do you need quick training or a refresher course in public health?
We have hundreds of convenient and affordable courses available for you. Search our database to find the courses you need.

Keyword or phrase
Search

www.asph.org/phtc/search-new.cfm

Looking for training recommendations?
View our bundled courses:

Program Evaluation
Public Health 101
Epidemiology
Health Literacy
Environmental Public Health
Cultural Competency and Diversity 101
Communication
Health Disparities

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
OpenCourseWare (OCW)

http://ocw.jhsph.edu/
Available Courses include:

**Biostatistics:**
- Introduction to Biostatistics: Sampling Mathematics and the Normal Population Distribution - Course ID 1019120
- Introduction to Biostatistics 2: Variables - Course ID 1019223

**Epidemiology:** There are several pages of courses on Epidemiology. Some highlights include:
- Epidemiology for Non-Epidemiologists - Course ID 1008743
- Introduction to Epidemiology - Course ID 1005193
- Basic Epidemiology - Course ID 1012950

[www.train.org/DesktopShell.aspx](http://www.train.org/DesktopShell.aspx)
Other resources: Public Health Academic Institutions
USF alumni society

General Information
Register for the exam: www.chapa.org

Competency document AND to order a copy of the National Certification Exam Study Guide. If you are a member of Delta Omega, you can order the study guide at a discount – details available on the Delta Omega login: www.chapa.org

Handouts
- Biostatistics: http://publichealth.usfhealthalumni.net/page=biostatistics
- Environmental and Occupational Health: http://publichealth.usfhealthalumni.net/page=EH
- Epidemiology: http://publichealth.usfhealthalumni.net/page=epidemiology
- Health Policy and Management: http://publichealth.usfhealthalumni.net/page=healthpolicy
- Social and Behavioral Sciences Applied to Health: http://publichealth.usfhealthalumni.net/page=sbs

Audio/Videos
- The Cross-Cutting Competencies and the National Public Health Certification Exam: An Enlightening Conversation between Dean Petersen and Associate Dean Liller: http://publichealth.usfhealthalumni.net/page=videos
- Principles of Health Policy and Management: http://publichealth.usfhealthalumni.net/page=videos

Review Questions
- Biostatistics: http://publichealth.usfhealthalumni.net/page=biostatistics
- Environmental and Occupational Health: http://publichealth.usfhealthalumni.net/page=EH
- Epidemiology: http://publichealth.usfhealthalumni.net/page=epidemiology
- Health Policy and Management: http://publichealth.usfhealthalumni.net/page=healthpolicy
- Interdisciplinary: http://publichealth.usfhealthalumni.net/page=interdisciplinary

Social and Behavioral Sciences Applied to Health: http://publichealth.usfhealthalumni.net/page=sbs
Other Resources: Study Groups
Advice from CPH professionals:
Advice from CPH professionals:

As with other standardized tests, timing and rhythm is crucial. Go prepared for an exhausting morning or afternoon, bring plenty of granola bars for the breaks and don't abuse caffeine.

Use the study guide and review the areas outlined in the core competencies as a good starting point and you will pass. The exam takes time; be well rested and relaxed.
Advice from CPH professionals:

Don't hesitate to take the exam. Use the resources that are available to help you review and prepare for the exam. Your Public Health degree has already provided you with all the core competencies covered in the exam questions.

Refresh your memory and you'll be ready to go!
Advice from CPH professionals:

The standardized exam experience hasn't changed much, aside from being completed on a computer. Be rested and relaxed. Take breaks, as needed. When you are uncertain of the answer, your first instinct on the response is likely correct (After all, you did learn all of the core competencies during your public health education!)
Advice from CPH professionals

I didn't study for the test, but if a person has the time, I would recommend it. I used my experience to answer the questions.
Advice from CPH professionals

I was 27 years out of graduate school when I took the exam last summer, and it was a wonderful motivation to review what I learned in school and to make sure that I was keeping up with developments in public health. Unless you are a recent graduate, you absolutely do need to study!
Advice from CPH professionals

The test doesn’t cover the detailed intricacies of quantitative analysis. It covers the information you should know anyway: the core competencies. Just brush up on the basics and you’ll be in a great position to pass the test.

Study, get a good night’s sleep, and eat breakfast!
Advice from CPH professionals

I told the students to take the exam while the material was fresh in their mind. There is no harm in taking the exam and the exam fee is comparable to other national certifications. Plus, it can only be seen as a positive attribute when job searching.

I learned that even though I am a poor test taker, I could still pass the exam. I studied and prepared ahead of time. The exam was a great overview of the public health field, however, it was also very broad. We need to know a lot of material!
Can I retake the CPH exam?

- Yes (assuming acceptable behavior)
- Retake at going rate for each administration
What if I no-show or forget my Scheduling Permit?

Refund Policy: The registration fee is not refundable but it is deferrable. The international exam fee is not refundable.

Can I defer to another year?  Yes
Can I reschedule to a different day?  Yes…
Be a Public Health Professional. Be CPH.

- Testing period: February 3-27, 2012

- Offered in over 300 locations in U.S. and globally. Up charge outside of USA/Canada/PR/US VI/Guam

- Don’t need to know where you’ll be in Feb. to register now.

- Appointments for locations and time are on a first-come, first-served basis. So sign up today!
Got CPH?

Register now for first dibs on exam date, time, and location

www.publichealthexam.org

Deadline = 11.30.11 @ midnight EST