

DIS Certification Project Update

The Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS) Certification Project is in the assessment phase. The assessment activities will determine the best model for DIS certification, and are foundational for any DIS certification program.



WHAT are Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS)? A flexible public health workforce asset with skills that are used beyond STD and HIV, including TB, other communicable disease, and emergency preparedness and response. DIS are non-licensed public health professionals with applied expertise in:

- Client-centered interviews
- Collection of enhanced surveillance and community assessment data
- Partner services, including contact tracing
- Field investigation and other field-based activities, including specimen collection, directly observed therapy, community outreach
- Collaboration with medical providers, and navigation of health care systems to ensure patient evaluation and treatment
- Mobilization for outbreak investigation and emergency response



Certification is expected to:

- 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
- Increase recognition of the skills and abilities of DIS

BROAD STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IS CRITICAL TO THIS PROCESS AND INVOLVES:

Certification and Credentialing Subject Matter Experts (Public Health Accreditation Board, PSI Services LLC, American Nurses Credentialing Center)

PHAB's DIS Certification National Advisory Committee (ASTHO, NACCHO, NASTAD, NCSD, NTBC, CSTE, PHAB Board Members, Emergency Preparedness, State-County-Local Health Jurisdiction Representatives, STD/HIV & TB National Training Centers)

DIS Subject Matter Experts from various program areas (e.g. STD, HIV, TB, Hepatitis, Other CD, Emergency Preparedness), various career areas (e.g. Health department DIS, Community Based Organization DIS, DIS Supervisors, Epidemiologists, Outbreak Response Coordinators, Program Managers), and CDC OSTLTS, CDC DSTDP, CDC DHAP, CDC DTBE

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

Job Task Analysis

Defines DIS job role and function, identifying specific tasks, knowledge and skills to support task performance

Lays the foundation for certification and used to inform the development of 1) DIS competencies; 2) standardized DIS job description; 3) feasibility reports and content for certification models; 4) identification of training needs

Multiphase process - legally defensible, industry standard:

- Outline detailing domains, tasks, and knowledge
- Assessment and revision of task and knowledge statements through multiple, iterative reviews by subject matter experts
- Pilot survey to further refine the DIS task and knowledge statements
- Public survey of DIS to validate tasks, knowledge and skill statements and rank in order of importance and frequency performed
- Analysis of survey results
- Application to test specifications

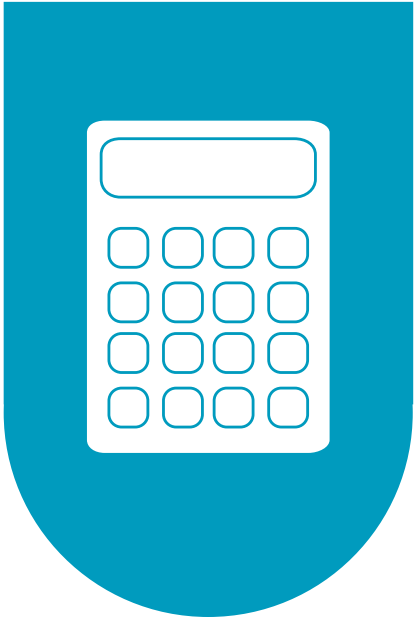
DIS competencies for certification: 9 domains with 55 tasks and 91 knowledge statements

Task Domains

- Planning and Preparation for Case & Field Work
- Investigation Activities
- Client Encounters & Interviewing
- Surveillance Activities
- Health System Collaboration & Improvement in Quality of Care
- Outbreak Response & Emergency Preparedness
- Clinical Support Services
- Testing and Field Services
- Case Analysis



DIS Job Analysis Survey was fielded between October 26, 2015 and January 26, 2016: The survey had **494 respondents** indicating that the tasks (98.25%) and knowledge (99.01%) statements were sufficiently important & covered content



DIS Enumeration

Purpose: Enumeration of the number of STD/HIV DIS positions within the U.S. public health workforce to inform analysis of certification models; secondary assessment of STD/HIV DIS workload and capacity

Included: All DIS that support health department's STD and HIV programs (including all funding sources and vacant positions)

Excluded: Community health workers, epidemiologists, public health nurses, and federal assignees (such as Public Health Advisors and Public Health Associate Program (PHAP) associates).

Survey was conducted online from June to August 2016

- **Phase 1:** Distributed to all 50 state health departments and 6 territorial health departments
- **Phase 2:** Distributed to all local health departments in states that did not respond during Phase 1 (including those that could not provide the requested information at the state level) and directly funded cities that were not included in their states' response

Results: 1,661 STD/HIV DIS positions (of which 1,404 are filled); and 402 STD/HIV DIS supervisor positions

Potential Certification Models

Test Based Model

- Voluntary process by which a non-governmental agency grants a time-limited recognition to an individual
- Certifies an individual as being able to competently complete a job or task
- Usually requires an examination and/or the completion of a program of study
- May require work experience in a related field

Portfolio Review Model

- Voluntary process by which a non-governmental agency grants a time-limited recognition to an individual
- Requires verification that individual has met predetermined and standardized criteria through the review of a collective body of work
- Designed to objectively assess specialized knowledge, understanding, and application of practice standards or best practices

Unit Based Model

- Voluntary process by which a non-governmental agency grants a time-limited recognition to an organizational unit
- Requires verification that the organizational unit meets standards for health department performance and individual DIS have met competency and performance standards
- Combines the performance of the individual with the performance of the unit, and documentation against standards is submitted together and reviewed together
- Requires the continual development, revision, and distribution of unit and individual standards

DIS Registry

Goal: Maintain a compilation of identifiable information for all active DIS in each jurisdiction

Process: NCSD sent an email requesting names and email addresses of all active DIS and DIS Supervisors from each of the 65 CDC directly funded project areas.

Registry Composition:

- DIS or equivalent classification at state and local levels including all program areas (STD, HIV, TB, other CD), all fund sources and any proportion of FTE
- DIS Supervisors
- Public Health Nurses that serve as DIS
- Community Health Outreach Workers that serve as DIS

Next Steps:

- Update the registry in early 2017
- Exploring a professional society for DIS



Next Steps

An analysis of the benefits, challenges and costs of potential certification models will be presented to the PHAB DIS Certification National Advisory Committee for review and discussion. This certification model analysis, additional considerations from the advisory committee, and identifications of other essential supports (e.g. training, etc.) will be included in the DIS Certification Assessment Summary Report (expected in Spring 2017) submitted to CDC and key project partners for consideration.