



## NEWS RELEASE

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AzCHOW Media Contact: Floribella Redondo [floribella@azchow.org](mailto:floribella@azchow.org) (928) 366-3016

# ARIZONA COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER WORKFORCE URGES STATEWIDE RECOGNITION

PHOENIX- The Arizona Community Health Worker (AzCHOW) Association and the Arizona Community Health Worker Workforce Coalition (AzCHW) will lead an informational session for the Arizona House Health Committee on February 2, 2016, regarding recognition and voluntary credentialing of Community Health Workers in our state.

Community Health Workers are frontline public health workers who are trusted members and/or have an in-depth understanding of the community they serve. Community Health Workers, or CHWs, are known by many titles, including Promotoras, Community Health Representatives, and Patient Navigators. There are an estimated 1,000 CHWs employed in Arizona. CHWs serve all 15 Arizona counties and 19 Tribes.

State Rep. Heather Carter (R-Cave Creek), who's chair of the House Health Committee, invited the Arizona CHW Workforce Coalition and AzCHOW to present information on the scope of practice, professional development, and recognition of Community Health Workers in Arizona, and the critical role they play in our public health and health care delivery system.

Voluntary credentialing would standardize the competencies and scope of practice of a Community Health Worker and establish the mechanism for professional recognition and career development for the workforce. A standardized Community Health Worker workforce would benefit the health care system by ensuring the integrity of the workforce and the positive health outcomes associated with Community Health Workers related services.

Jill Guernsey de Zapien, longtime Community Health Worker advocate and member of the Arizona Community Health Worker Workforce Coalition, describes why voluntary certification is such an important step for Community Health Workers in Arizona: "Community Health Workers are an incredibly important resource for our state and health care system, delivering high quality, cost-effective, and culturally competent public health services. Arizona has a long history of supporting this workforce, and now is the time to support a voluntary certification to assure positive health outcomes for Arizona residents."

A recent study conducted by the Arizona Prevention Research Center showed that women who received a CHW visit were 35 percent more likely to go to their local community health center for a chronic disease screening. Community Health Workers have demonstrated a cost savings of \$6.10 for every \$1 spent in providing self-management education and care coordination for diabetics.

The informational session is an opportunity for Arizona House Health Committee members to learn about the abundance of scientific evidence on the efficacy of Community Health Workers and how they are an essential component of the public health and health care system at the state level.

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