

The Community Health Worker

A Pathway to Improved Health Outcomes

A Pathway to a Career



www.FloridaCHW.org

A statewide partnership dedicated to the support and promotion of the Community Health Worker profession in Florida

Community Health Worker (CHW) or Promotores(as) de Salud:

A frontline health worker who is a trusted member of and/or has an unusually close understanding of the community served. This trusting relationship enables the CHW to serve as a liaison, link, and intermediary between health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery. – APHA CHW Section, 2010

The Reality of the U.S. Healthcare System:

- Physician and Nursing Shortages
- Lack of access to a medical home
- Lack of access to specialists
- Barriers to accessing health care
- Rising costs of health care
- Inadequate culturally appropriate information and education
- According to World Health Organization, 30% of cancer deaths could be prevented by reducing risk factors¹
- Health promotion and disease prevention education is necessary in the home and in a community-based environment

Solution: Utilizing Community Health Workers to reduce health disparities and promote the health and wellness of our underserved at risk communities

- Connect their community to needed resources
- Improve patient experience
- Improve community health outcomes
- Provide high return on investment²
- Contribute to a more efficient health care system³
- Assist patients and caregivers to navigate the healthcare system

CHW Contributions to the Health Care Team:

- Bridge cultures between communities and the health and social service system⁴
- Provide culturally appropriate health education and information
- Assure people receive the services they need
- Provide information and social support
- Advocate for individual and community needs
- Build individual and community capacity
- Improve patient education and follow-through⁵
- Fill gaps in service delivery⁶
- Help to reduce emergency rooms visits and re-hospitalizations
- Provide access to clinical and community services
- Help to identify early stages of chronic diseases⁷

US Department of Bureau Labor Statistics, 2010, officially recognized this occupation by adding it to its Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system in 2010. Occupational growth for CHWs is projected as communities seek to build effective linkages with the health care systems.⁸

Difference between a CHW and an insurance assistor (navigator):

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER	INSURANCE ASSISTOR (NAVIGATOR)
Trusted representative of community served	Community involvement not necessary
Broad-based	Single focus
Knowledge of general health resources	Only know about insurance marketplace
Long-term community-clinical linkage	Short-term position in enrollment
Have a 50+ year history of assisting in education and patient management of chronic disease	Newly developed, limited job description for insurance marketplace alone

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CHW Projected Employment Growth, 2012 - 2022:⁹

- Role of CHW becoming more understood
- Employment of CHWs expected to increase
- 25% increase in employment projected 2012-2022
- Employment growth for CHW is more than twice the rate when compared to *all occupations* combined
- Employment growth for CHW is 6% higher than that of a health educator

CHW Reimbursement Efforts - A Pathway to a Career

- CMS Medicaid Rule for reimbursement of preventive services, effective January 1, 2014
- CHW Certification to begin January 2015 for experienced CHWs (being “grandparented”), standard certification to begin January 2016 through Florida Certification Board
- Formalize CHW education programs with approved standardized competencies
- HB 285 (Rep. Narain) and SB 482 (Sen. Braynon) for 2015 Legislative Session: recognizing CHWs and codifying voluntary certification by a third party entity approved by the Department of Health

Additional Information and Evidenced-Based Research:

- CHWs working with people with diabetes resulted in annual savings of \$2200/patient¹⁰
- In asthma control, a CHW initiative reduced ER visits by 65% and hospitalizations by 81%¹¹
- Healthy Start Coalitions report that CHWs improve maternal and infant outcomes through both a higher utilization of pre-natal care and breastfeeding
- Data provide evidence of economic contributions that CHWs make to a public safety net system and inform policy making regarding program sustainability¹²
- Improving diabetes care and health measures among Hispanics using community health workers: results show 2.9 times greater odds of decreasing body mass index¹³
- Reducing preventable emergency department utilization and costs by using community health workers as patient navigators¹⁴
- *Acción para la Salud* - CHWs worked to initiate discussions about underlying social determinants and environment-related factors that impact health, and identified solutions to improve neighborhood conditions, create community opportunities, and increase access to services¹⁵
- Community health workers successfully conducted psychosocial screening and elicited more self-reported risk than RNs, especially lack of basic needs. Comparing the hourly salary/ wage, the cost for CHWs was 56% lower than for RNs¹⁶

References:

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- ⁴ Maynuik M, Mensing C, Imershein S, Gregory A, Jackson R “Enhancing the role of medical office staff in Diabetes care and Education” *Clinical Diabetes* July 2013 vol. 31 no. 3 116-122
- ⁵ Liebman J, Hefferman D, “Quality improvement in diabetes care using community health workers” *Clinical Diabetes* April 2008 vol.26 no. 2 75-76
- ⁶ Helseth C, “Community health workers Playing a bigger role in health care” *The Rural Monitor* November 15,2010
- ⁷ Cancer “Global battle against cancer won’t be won with treatment alone. Effective prevention measures urgently needed to prevent cancer crisis” World Health Organization Press # 224 Feb 2014.
- ⁸ US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2010 officially recognized this occupation by adding it to its Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system
- ⁹ U.S. Bureau Of Labor Statistics. Employment Projections Program, 2014
- ¹⁰ Fedder, DO, et al, “The effectiveness of a community health worker outreach program on healthcare utilization of west Baltimore City Medicaid patients with diabetes, with or without hypertension” *Ethnicity & Disease*, 13(1), 22-27
- ¹¹ CDC, Addressing Chronic Disease through Community Health Workers: A Policy and Systems-Level Approach, Issue brief (March 2011)
- ¹² Whitley EM, Everhart RM, Wright RA, “Measuring return on investment of outreach by community health workers” *Jrnl of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved* 2006 Feb;17(1 Suppl):6-15.
- ¹³ Babamoto KS, Sey KA, Camilleri AJ, Karlan VJ, Catalasan J, Morisky DE “Improving diabetes care and health measures among hispanics using community health workers: results from a randomized controlled trial” *Health Education and Behavior :the official publication of the Society for Public Health Education* 2009 Feb;36(1):113-26.
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- ¹⁶ Godecker AL, Harrison PA, Sidebottom AC, “Nurse versus community health worker identification of psychosocial risks in pregnancy through a structured interview” *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved* 2013 Nov;24(4):1574-85.