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The Health Care Puzzle: Where do CHWs Fit?

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What is a Community Health Worker (CHW)?

Frontline public health workers who are trusted members of and/or have an unusually close understanding of the community served. This trusting relationship enables CHWs to serve as a liaison, link, or intermediary between health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery. CHWs also build individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency through a range of activities such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support, and advocacy.

History of CHWs

- Been around since the 60's
 - Primarily used to provide support for migrant workers
 - Promotoras
 - Still around today
- ACA
 - Fee-based to value-based care
 - Spurred growth in CHW workforce



CHW definition

Nevada definition (NRS 449):

Sec. 2. “Community health worker” means a natural person who:

1. Lives in or otherwise has a connection to the community in which he or she provides services.
2. Is trained by a provider of health care to provide certain services which do not require the community health worker to be Licensed.
3. Provides services at the direction of a facility for the dependent, medical facility or provider of health care which may include, without limitation, outreach and the coordination of health care.

CHWs in Nevada

Approximately 300 trained since January 1st
2015

Urban Vs Rural distribution

County	# per county
Carson City	8
Churchill County	13
Clark County	75
Elko County	7
Lyon County	36
Mineral County	1
Nye County	16
Storey County	2
Washoe County	42

What are the roles of a CHW?

- Identify barriers to care
- Provide referral and follow-up services or care coordination
- Connect clients and/or patients to culturally competent care
- Strengthen community understanding of health care and health resources

Educate ● Refer ● Empower

What makes CHWs Unique

- They are hired for their trusting relationship
- They understand the populations and communities they serve
- They have experience providing services in community settings.
- They can spend more time with populations they serve.
- They often have opportunity to visit client in their home – home visits.



What titles do CHWs work under

Number of identified titles: 22

Examples of titles CHWs work under:

- Community Health Worker
- Safe School Professional
- Program Manager
- Program Specialist
- Resource Coordinator
- Case Manager
- Coalition Coordinator
- Community Health Advocate
- Community Health Nurse
- Director
- Education Coordinator
- Exchange Enrollment Facilitator
- Harm Reduction & Outreach Coordinator
- Health And Wellness
- Health Educator
- Intern
- Navigation Care Coordinator
- Office Specialist II
- Outreach Worker
- Patient Services Educator
- Project Manager
- Resource Liaison

What settings are CHWs working in?

Three major settings:

- Clinical
- Community
- School

Organizations identified as employing CHWs: 55

Include clinics, community organizations,
schools, food banks



What do CHWs do?

- CHWs can provide a connection to a community member to various resources
- Use their relationship with a client to identify and address upstream issues affecting the client's health
- Provide health education on various topics
- Help the client to navigate the intricate health system



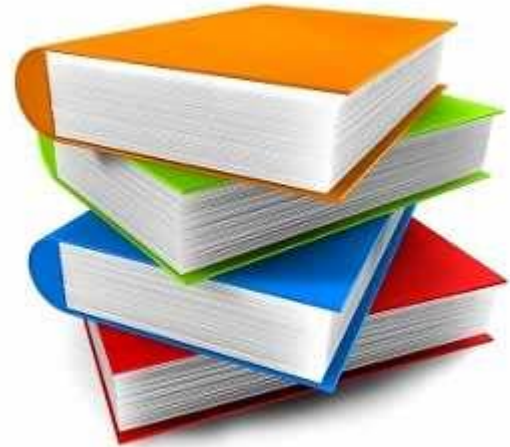
How do CHWs save money?

- CHWs save money by decreasing health disparities and increasing access and utilization of preventive care
- Help to keep individuals from relying on costly Emergency room visits
- Helps to keep individuals from developing chronic diseases which are more expensive to manage
- Allow individuals as part of care teams to work at the top of their license
- Allow for the provision of more individual care at a lower cost



Research on CHWs

- Increased positive health outcomes
- Increased preventive health screenings
- Increased prescription medication adherence
- Decreased unnecessary ER usage
- Increased healthcare usage
- Increased confidence in disease management



Benefits of using a CHW

Average ROI of 3:1

Nevada Specific Study: ROI of 1.81:1

- Improved utilization
- Improved prescription adherence
- Improved health outcomes



Integrating CHWs

What other states are doing:

- Many states are utilizing CHWs to improve utilization and follow up for mental health services (AK, IN, MO, NH, WV)
- Some states use CHWs in clinics and hospitals to reduce the overall cost of care.
- Schools pair CHWs with School Social Workers to identify Children/families in Need and connect them to resources
- Organizations often use CHWs to do outreach in the community → increasing screening and primary care utilization

How to integrate CHWs

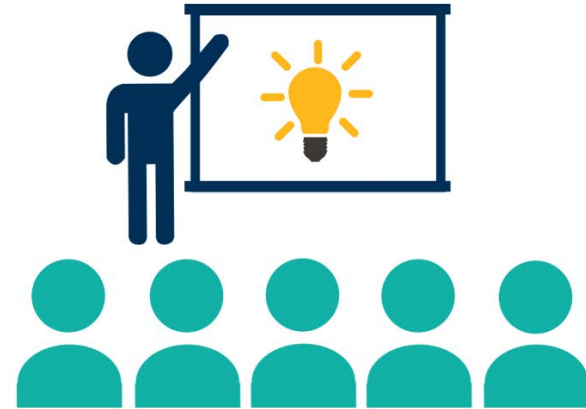
Care team - Include them in meetings about clients, CHWs often gather information on clients that may help the team see the full picture. CHWs have been utilized in both physical health and behavioral health clinics

Community Organization - ensure CHW has strong connection to the organization and within the community, ensure they spend time out in the community at events and gathering places (food banks, meetings, classes) to get to know the clients and community

Schools - Ensure they have strong support from the School Social Worker, in this case teamwork is essential to being able to provide adequate care

Training Requirements

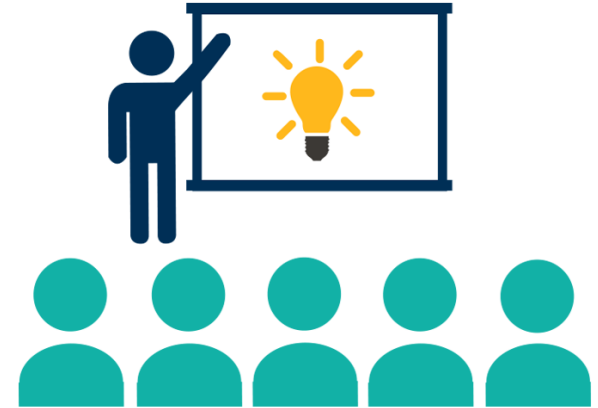
- None currently required:
 - CHW agency pool regulations
- Courses available
 - TMCC: Online; rolling enrollment
 - CSN: In-Person; approximately quart
 - NvCHWA: Hybrid; quarterly



Training Considerations

CHW training generally provides only basic core competency training. Depending on the environment and population a CHW work in/with they may need additional training

- FERPA
- HIPAA
- First Aid/CPR
- Chronic disease specific education training
- Motivational Interviewing



Core Competencies

- Communication
- Interpersonal Relationships
- Knowledge about the community, health issues, and available resources
- Service Coordination
- Capacity Building
- Advocacy
- Teaching and Education
- Organization

CHWs: Average Pay

Pay varies widely and many studies on pay are skewed due to the number of nurses and other professions which often identify as CHWs.

BLS 2015: \$43,840 per year ; \$21.08 per hour

Nevada (2017) - \$32,833 per year ; \$15.79/hour





Nevada Community Health Worker Association (NvCHWA)

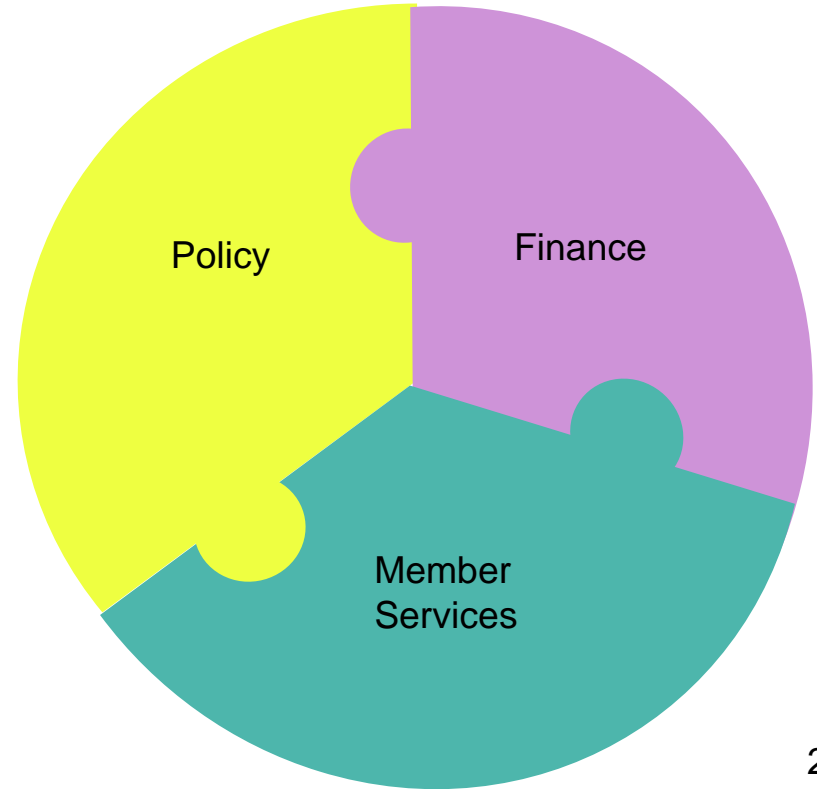
The NvCHWA mission is to unify, strengthen, and grow the presence of a diverse, collaborative network of Community Health Workers and Community Health Worker employers in Nevada by providing advocacy, promotion, education, support, and professional development opportunities focused on increasing access to health care and social services, and improving community wellness.

NvCHWA Goals

- Goal 1: Educate employers and advocate for the placement of CHWs within diverse work settings
- Goal 2: Advocate and expand the possible reimbursement sources for CHWs in Nevada
- Goal 3: Educate and connect CHWs to create a strong CHW network in Nevada
- Goal 4: Create a sustainable NvCHWA

NvCHWA Projects

- Membership
- Annual Event
- Training/Continuing education
- Data Collection
- Reimbursement for CHWs in Nevada



Additional Resources

NvCHWA Website: <http://chwnv.org/>

ASTHO Webiste: <http://www.astho.org/Community-Health-Workers/>

NvDPBH CHW handbook: <http://chwnv.org/resources-materials/helpful-tools-for-chws/>

CDC CHW Webinars: https://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/chw_elearning/index.html

Questions?



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