

Texas Community Health Worker Training and Certification Program:

Shared Curriculum Report

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By

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**BACKGROUND**

The Promotora or Community Health Worker (CHW) Training and Certification Program in Texas was implemented in 2001 and provides certification for *promotores* or CHWs, instructors and training programs. It is based on competencies such as communication, interpersonal, capacity building, service coordination, advocacy, teaching, organization and knowledge base on specific health issues. Certification requires a completion of an approved 160-hour competency-based training program certified by DSHS or experience of at least 1000 cumulative hours of community health work services within the past 6 years.



Figure 1. Number of certified CHWs from December 2008 to December 2015.

Currently, there are over 35 organizations approved by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) providing certified continuing education for community health workers (CHWs) and CHW instructors. The training programs include institutions of higher education, community colleges, nonprofit organizations, clinics & hospitals, health districts and community centers. There are approximately 3,900 DSHS certified CHWs and over 250 DSHS certified instructors in Texas as of August 2016.

**Continuing Education/Project Goal**

DSHS and the approved training programs share a deep commitment to ensuring quality continuing education (CE). The potential to share approved curricula between training programs will improve consistency of training and, most importantly, will increase statewide availability of DSHS certified curricula. This will allow a more diverse selection of courses offerings for CHWs and instructors across Texas. The objective of this report is to formalize a system for sharing curricula.

The number of certified CHWs has been increasing over the past years in Texas. The goal of the Shared Curriculum project is to build a system for identifying shareable CE curriculum. Letters were sent out to all 35 CHW programs across Texas. A total of 346 DSHS-certified curricula were identified as being approved from January 2011 to present.

* **Institutions of higher education:** Texas A&M University Colonias Program Academy, Texas Tech Health Sciences Center - School of Nursing, UT School of Public Health, Texas A&M Health Science Center - Office of Special Programs, Texas AHEC East - Piney Woods Region (Stephen F. Austin State University), Texas AHEC West (TTUHSC), Texas A&M Center for Community Health Development
* **Community colleges:** El Centro College, Houston Community College, Northwest Vista College
* **Nonprofit organizations:** Adults and Youth Development Association, Inc. (A.Y.U.D.A.), Cardea Services, Dia de la Mujer Latina, EBS Leadership Institute/El Buen Samaritano Episcopal Mission, Familias Triunfadoras, PromoSalud, South Texas Promotora Association, Migrant Health Promotion, National Center for Farmworkers Health, Migrant Clinicians  Network, Diabetes Health & Wellness Institute, Gateway to Care, Texas AHEC East - Coastal Region, Texas AHEC East - Greater Houston, Texas AHEC South-South Coastal, Community Health Training Institute
* **Clinics & hospitals:** Children's Medical Center, Harris Health System, Lubbock Community Health Center, Gateway Community Health Center,
* **Health districts, community centers, other:** Texas AHEC East - DFW Region, Texas AHEC East - Northeast Region, DSHS Health Service Region 1, DSHS MHSA

Of note, two programs that are approved did not have any shareable curriculum (ie. AHEC East Capital and Proyecto Juan Diego).

**Training Program Responses**

DSHS received a response from the training program for 340 of 346 identified curricula. A total of 56.5% (N=192) of the curriculum were listed as able to be shared, 37.1% (N= 126) were listed as not able to be shared and 6.5% (N=22) as possible, not sure or non applicable. Of the curricula that were not shared, responses indicated that 19 of them would be shared at a later time. Additionally, the survey inquired about a fee with the associated sharing of the curriculum. A total of 159 responses were provided through the survey, including 61% (N=97) of the curricula for which there will not be a fee for sharing, 22.6% (N=36) for which the training program will assign a fee to share the curriculum and the remaining 16.3% (N=26) indicated not sure, possible or doesn’t apply to the curricula.

Figure 2. Shared curricula response rate from January 2011 through July 2016.

**Conclusion**

The survey showed that the majority of programs agreed to share their curriculum with no associated fees. With the number of certified CHWs increasing year to year, it is important to offer certified training that meets the needs of CHWs. The potential to share approved curricula between training programs will improve consistency of training and, most importantly, will increase statewide availability of DSHS certified curricula. This will allow a more diverse selection of courses offerings for CHWs and instructors across Texas.