

# 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 factors<sup>1</sup>
- 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 investment<sup>2</sup>
- Contribute to a more efficient health care system<sup>3</sup>
- 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 system<sup>4</sup>
- 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-through<sup>5</sup>
- Fill gaps in service delivery<sup>6</sup>
- Help to reduce emergency rooms visits and re-hospitalizations
- Provide access to clinical and community services
- Help to identify early stages of chronic diseases<sup>7</sup>

*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.<sup>8</sup>*

#### Changing Landscape of Health Care Delivery:

- CHWs help to emphasize wellness and prevention
  - Development of Patient Centered Medical Homes
  - Reducing use of Emergency Rooms
  - Reducing hospital re-admissions
  - More people will be insured, and will need to learn how to use insurance correctly
  - Team approach for health care provision, including CHWs
- CHWs can be known by other names, some of which are:
- *Promotores(as) de Salud*
  - Peer educators
  - Outreach workers
  - Family Support Workers
  - Case coordinators
  - Community Health Representatives
  - Peer Advocates

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#### CHW Projected Employment Growth, 2012 - 2022:<sup>9</sup>

- 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
- A Certification credential demonstrates meeting competency standards, conducting oneself professionally, and adhering to a Code of Ethics. It can help with having more stable employment.

#### 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/patient<sup>10</sup>
- In asthma control, a CHW initiative reduced ER visits by 65% and hospitalizations by 81%<sup>11</sup>
- 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 sustainability<sup>12</sup>
- Improving diabetes care and health measures among Hispanics using community health workers: results show 2.9 times greater odds of decreasing body mass index<sup>13</sup>
- Reducing preventable emergency department utilization and costs by using community health workers as patient navigators<sup>14</sup>
- *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 services<sup>15</sup>
- 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 RNs<sup>16</sup>

#### References:

- <sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, “Cancer” 2014
- <sup>2</sup> Sherry M, “Community Health workers serving greater roles in Health Care” KHI New Services April 2013
- <sup>3</sup> Herman, AA, “Community health workers and integrated primary health care teams in the 21st century” The Journal of Ambulatory Care Management, 2011 Oct-Dec; 34(4):354-61.
- <sup>4</sup> 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
- <sup>5</sup> Liebman J, Hefferman D, “Quality improvement in diabetes care using community health workers” Clinical Diabetes April 2008 vol.26 no. 2 75-76
- <sup>6</sup> Helseth C, “Community health workers Playing a bigger role in health care” The Rural Monitor November 15,2010
- <sup>7</sup> 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.
- <sup>8</sup> US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2010 officially recognized this occupation by adding it to its Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system
- <sup>9</sup>U.S. Bureau Of Labor Statistics. Employment Projections Program, 2014
- <sup>10</sup>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
- <sup>11</sup> CDC, Addressing Chronic Disease through Community Health Workers: A Policy and Systems-Level Approach, Issue brief (March 2011)
- <sup>12</sup> Whitley EM, Everhart RM, Wright RA, “Measuring return on investment of outreach by community health workers” Jnl of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved 2006 Feb;17(1 Suppl):6-15.
- <sup>13</sup> 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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- <sup>15</sup> Ingram M, Schachter KA, Sabo SJ, Reinschmidt KM, Gomez S, De Zapien JG, Carvajal SC, “A Community Health Worker Intervention to Address the Social Determinants of Health Through Policy Change” The Journal of Primary Prevention 2013 Dec 22.
- <sup>16</sup> 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.