Community Health Workers

Experiences, roles and skills needed across the continuum of care and prevention in the COVID-19 pandemic

Floribella Redondo-Martinez, BS
Arizona Community Health Workers Association

• AzCHOW is a statewide organization of community-based advocates that provides opportunity for Community Health Workers (CHWs) to speak with a collective voice.

• AzCHOW and has been advocating for the work of CHWs in Arizona since 2001.

• AzCHOW leads through resource sharing, partnership development, education, outreach, health promotion, and disease prevention strategies to improve the health of all Arizona residents.
Role of CHWs in the Continuum of Care

Health Promotion, Disease Prevention
- Community Outreach
- Home visitation/Assessment of individual and family needs
- Individual and group chronic disease and or emotional support
- Awareness, education referrals,
- Linking individuals with community resources
- Social determinants of health

Direct Care / Providers Visits
- Follow-up phone call and or home visit
- Link individual to community and clinical services
- Assist in referrals and care coordination
- Home or group individual/family, social and emotional support
- Root causes- address social determinants of health

Follow-up and Care Coordination

Patient/client
Role of CHWs in the Continuum of Care during COVID-19

Health Promotion, Disease Prevention

- Outreach: Phone calls, text, emails, Facetime
- Community engagement – education and messages via Facebook, Twitter, webinars and other social media outlets
- Prevention classes via zoom meetings/connections: DPP Healthy Lifestyle, Linking Individuals to community and clinical services, Social Support to Families going through cancer diagnosis, among others

Direct Care / Providers Visits

Follow-up and Care Coordination

- Follow-up calls and texts
- Care coordination, assist with referrals to services needed
- Provide virtual social and emotional support,
- Build individual capacity and family support via phone, text, front yard messages, and or drive through messages

Patient/client
Promotores/CHWs felt the mental health impact of the pandemic on themselves and their families.

Tools had to be developed to identify the need in their communities - socioeconomic determinants impacted by COVID-19 pandemic.

Promotores/CHWs roles and responsibilities:

• Need to keep to date on coronavirus - information was constantly changing
• CHWs felt the stress and the responsibility to ensure their clients / participants were doing well.
• Stress and anxiety of in addition to responding to the needs of the pandemic, CHWs needed to continue to disseminate information on their “regular work activities”, plus continue promoting Voter registration, CENSUS 2020, and try to continue to address the importance of reporting violence in the home and community
• In some places CHW job and responsibility changed to include, assist in the front lines conducting initial patient intakes

Used calls to remind about the guidelines on washing hands, social distancing..

Need to address cultural traditions/practices among Hispanic families.

Many CHW groups developed and provided masks to vulnerable communities.
Hispanic Communities and COVID-19

Challenges of Hispanic communities

• Vulnerable populations
• US-Mexico Border impact
• Economic impact (unemployment)
• Multigenerational homes
• Shared families
• Technology challenges/barriers
• Fear of getting tested or getting healthcare services
Role of CHWs in Times of Pandemic

- Development of outreach questionnaire
- Response to the mental health needs of CHWs and community members
- Develop a manual of positive messages and activities for elderly clients that were isolated
- Provide updated information on pandemic and provided masks to vulnerable communities
Responding to the CHWs/Promotores Unprecedented Need for Mental Health Support

- AzCHOW was the first CHW association to offer Mental Health Virtual Workshops in English and Spanish
Strengthening CHW/Promotoras, and Community’s Mental Well Being

- Development of a manual / curriculum on emotional health and well-being that includes:
  - Relaxation techniques,
  - Cognitive exercise techniques,
  - Emotional techniques,
  - Visualization techniques, among other topics
Community Health Workers an Essential Workforce!

CHWs collaborate with universities in:
- Researching community needs and challenges
- Planning, developing and implementing CBPR interventions
- Assist in the collecting of program data
- Collaborate in the evaluation design
- Collaborate in the development of evidence base curriculum
- CHWs encourage individual/Community advocacy for sustained systems/environmental change
- CHWs brought community perspectives and voices to research process.
- CHWs validated study findings on the basis of their lived experiences.

Save The Date!
"Community Health Workers Responding To The Call Of Humanity Against COVID-19"

Fall CHW Workforce Virtual Symposium

November 19th, 2020

Hosted by:
Arizona Community Health Workers Association
THANK YOU!