**ASTHO CHW Learning Community: New Hampshire State Team Call**

January 31, 2020

**Call objectives:**

* Understand the national C3 (CHW Core Consensus Project) competencies for CHWs and how it could relate to CHW certification, training, hiring, and financing.
* Provide an update on discussions within New Hampshire about CHW certification, while recognizing the importance of CHW leadership.

Attendees: Geoffrey Wilkinson, Terry Mason, Trinidad Tellez, Anna Bartels, Tequam Tiruneh, Bryan L'Heureux, Amber Culver, Amy Marchildon, Carrie Chooljian, Ann Turner, Paula Smith, Nancy Collins, Beth Boucher, Annette Carbonneau

**The CHW Core Consensus Project (C3) Competencies for CHWs**

*Terry led discussion on Core Competencies*

* Defining the core skills for CHWs is the foundation for developing the field or workforce.
* The C3 project (<https://www.c3project.org/>) updated a national advisory study that was done in the late 90s. Like the original project, it was a collaborative work that included around 20 different networks of CHWs to learn about their roles and the skills required to do them. It is evidence-based and representative of CHWs’ description and input.
* The core skills include communication, interpersonal and relationship-building, service coordination, capacity building, advocacy, education and facilitation, individual and community assessments, outreach, professional skills and conduct, evaluation and research, and knowledge base.
* The C3 project emphasizes CHWs’ connectedness, credibility and commitment.
* CHWs know the communities, they move freely within it, are trusted, and have a commitment to the work with the community.
* CHWs have increasingly participated in the evaluation of programs and engaging CHWs.
* **Question:** What have been the efforts in your state to incorporate C3 into your curriculum?
  + Paula – NH incorporated C3 into our curriculum. The curriculum has been revised to align with the C3.
  + Bryan - the northern consortium (NH CHW coalition) has also integrated C3 into its curriculum. The northern and southern AHEC are the primary trainers and incorporate C3 into the trainings.
* **Question:** Is there a need to formally adopt C3 beyond what you already have described?
  + C3 has been formally adopted and the CHW coalition has adopted them a year ago.
* **Question:** Would it be possible to start a CHW training program in NH currently without C3?
  + The structure is not in place to control that but currently on the cusp of making those discussions. The coalition is getting ready to make decisions on next steps. The steering committee is looking at research on what other states are doing and there are efforts to bring the coalition together.
* **Question:** are there employers hiring CHWs but are not aware of C3 trainings?
  + Nancy— all have gone through CHW trainings, so they are familiar with C3. A parent company has also developed another training using C3.
  + Annette - the coalition’s strategic plan includes C3, and C3 will be a part of the larger meeting. There’s a lot of education provided to employers and mostly social services and C3 is part of it.

**Updates on Certification in New Hampshire**

*Geoff led discussion on certification*

* There is an emerging consensus on the value of community health worker certification in NH, with work left to do on the process to move the discussion forward.
* It’s important for CHWs, payers, and employers to settle together on a consensus on what certification means and its potential value and pitfalls.
* The purpose of sharing a consensus is to allow for the development of a certification program that is guarded against potential pitfalls of certification and to create a responsive program. For instance, certification could create barriers for CHWs to enter programs; therefore, there’s a need to think about what educational requirements should be put in place and what language requirements and other administrative processes could be barriers to entry. There is also a concern with over-medicalizing the role of CHWs.
* There’s a lot of latitude in terms of who gets certified: Could be an individual practitioner, the trainers, or both. Most states have both.
* There’s also a need to have a discussion whether it would be made mandatory or voluntary.
* **Question:** Can you share the extent to which you feel you have consensus on CHW certification?
  + There are ongoing conversations about what it should look like and whether it should be voluntary. The biggest challenge has been on ensuring that all the right people are coming to the table to engage in the conversation. The conversations have primarily been informal, so stakeholders are thinking of ways to scale it up and make it more action oriented.
* Geoff shared that different states have different ways in which the community health workers are engaged. Some have one organization representing them, while in other states there exist fractures in the different organizations that represent CHWs.
* **Question**: To what extent are the CHWs across the state in consensus? Is the coalition united?
  + There’s a lot of work that need to be done, but there are efforts to unite the workforce. The coalition is involved in that effort of unifying the voice of all CHWs across NH.
  + The coalition consists of not only CHWs but also stakeholders. The proportion is 50-50 in terms of membership. All decisions from the coalition will be representative of those of other stakeholders in addition to CHWs.
* **Question:** Is there a need for another entity or is the coalition the right entity for further organization and planning on certification?
  + The initial plan was not for the coalition to oversee CHW certification. The coalition is currently in a phase of gathering information and looking at other programs. The coalition is serving the role of bringing different voices to the table, although the intent is not to be the final decider.
  + The coalition does a good job of bringing people to the conversation, but there needs to be work done to engage those that are not currently represented. It will be important to identify the gaps and strategies for addressing that aspect. Among those that have had the opportunity to learn about certification, there’s receptivity to it but there is a need to ensure that diverse groups of CHWs are engaged in the conversation
  + 160 people are currently registered to be a part of the coalition, and conference calls are scheduled to have as many as possible in attendance.
  + CHWs from minority populations have not been as engaged in the coalition. When the coalition started in 2015, there was more engagement. There have been efforts from the coalition to re-engage all CHWs by trying to identify times that work for most. The issue could potentially be the employers’ inability to pay for the time of their participation or if the CHWs themselves are choosing not to attend.
* Geoff indicated that something to consider is exploring how to better understand the attrition and lack of engagement from those CHWs:
  + Paula suggested using a survey that will be sent members, who can also forward to CHWs that are not currently engaged to learn more about why they are not participating in the conversations.
    - Bryan shared that the coalition uses surveys sent out following meetings to get feedback on how the meetings can be improved. Members are planning to meet to discuss about next steps from the feedback.
  + Victoria suggested considering alternative options for engaging with those that are not able to join in the meeting in their current set-up. One of the suggestions was to consider going to where CHWs work to have more informal conversations with them during their breaks. Another option could be hosting lunch and learns.
  + Annette indicated the coalition is looking into engaging with and educating employers about the benefit of CHWs participating in the coalition. North Country has several CHW programs and is currently working with an evaluator. The coalition is also engaging with other states (e.g. Oregon) to learn about flexibility of funding.
  + Paula added that education on how to establish a return on investment statement around employing CHWs could also help employers understand the value of allowing their employees to engage in the coalition.
* Amber shared that the coalition is having meeting on February 26 and welcomed everyone on the call to participate if interested and available.

**Next Steps**

* ASTHO and Trini will establish next steps for the NH team to continue the discussion.