Community Health Workers: Critical Links between the Home Environment and Health Care

Minnesota Healthy Homes and Communities
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Presentation Outline

- Overview of the Community Health Worker (CHW) role
- Building blocks of Minnesota’s CHW field
- CHW models for healthy housing and communities
- Helpful resources
Minnesota CHW Alliance:

We are a broad-based partnership of CHWs and stakeholder organizations who work together to advance the CHW field.

http://www.mnchwalliance.org/
Objective: Advance the knowledge & skillset of CHWs to serve MN communities

Objective: Share research and strengthen policies to fully realize CHW impacts for better health

Objective: Foster CHW leadership development for healthy communities

Objective: Improve access to CHW services with expanded employment and sustainable funding

MN CHW Alliance
Help achieve the Triple Aim, address health disparities, expand & diversify the health care workforce and foster healthier communities through CHW strategies

Policy & Research

Education

Workforce

CHW Leadership
CHWs: An Emerging Profession

- Educate and connect underserved communities to care, coverage and support
- Work under different titles & in many settings
- Provide outreach, advocacy, patient education, care coordination, navigation, social support and informal counseling
- Trusted members of the communities they serve, with shared culture and life experiences
CHW Strategies: Evidenced-based best practices

- Effectively address cultural, linguistic, literacy-related, socioeconomic and other barriers to health and social services
- Increase access and improve quality, cost-effectiveness and cultural competence of care
- Expand and diversify our health care workforce
- Organize and advocate for healthier communities
CHW Roles

CHWs help patients of all ages:

• Prevent costly health conditions, diseases and injuries
• Access needed care, coverage & services
• Avoid unnecessary ER and hospital visits
• Navigate our complicated health care system
• Manage chronic illness and maintain quality of life
• Improve individual and family capacity
• Foster healthy homes and communities
CHW Roles, continued

CHWs help health providers, health plans & public health:

- Produce better outcomes
- Manage complex cases and reduce costs
- Find coverage options for the uninsured
- Educate, empower and activate patients for better health
- Deliver culturally-sensitive care
- Reach those who are vulnerable and/or hard-to-reach
- Effectively tackle health disparities
- Link to community services and organizations
CHW employer types and examples in Minnesota

Community-based Nonprofits
Clinics and Hospitals
Federally Qualified Health Centers
Public Health Departments
Dental Services
Mental Health Centers
CHW Profession & Benefits: Recognized by Leading Public & Private Authorities

- American Public Health Association (APHA)
- Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
- Health Affairs
- Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
- Institute of Medicine
- U.S. Dept. of Labor Standard Occupational Classification (DOL)
CHWs & Healthcare Reform

- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Workforce Innovation Grants
- Patient-Centered Medical Homes
- Health Insurance Exchanges
- Three sections of the Affordable Care Act
  - CDC grant (section 5313) to promote positive health behaviors and outcomes in medically underserved communities through Community Health Workers.
  - National Health Care Workforce Commission (Sec 5101) includes CHWs as primary care professionals
  - Area Health Education Centers (sec. 5403 Sec.751) add CHWs to mandate for interdisciplinary training of health professionals
MN CHW Building Blocks

- CHW scope of practice developed (2004)
- Standardized, competency-based 11 credit curriculum created by Healthcare Education Industry Partnership, leading to certificate (2003-2005); revised to 14 credit program (2010)
- Minnesota CHW Peer Network formed (2005)
- CHW payment legislation successfully introduced (2007) in follow-up to commissioned research on sustainable funding strategies (2006)
- Minnesota CHW Alliance formed as outgrowth of CHW Policy Council (2010) and incorporated as nonprofit (2011)
Minnesota CHW Scope of Practice

- **Role 1**: Bridge the gap between communities and the health and social service systems.
- **Role 2**: Promote wellness by providing culturally appropriate health information to clients and providers.
- **Role 3**: Assist in navigating the health and human services system.
- **Role 4**: Advocate for individual and community needs.
- **Role 5**: Provide direct services.
- **Role 6**: Build individual and community capacity.
MN CHW Curriculum

- Model curriculum was updated in 2010 to a required 14 credit certificate program
- MnSCU curriculum offered at no charge to post-secondary schools in Minnesota
- Sold to over 30 organizations outside of Minnesota
- Credits provide educational pathway for CHWs interested in other health careers
MN CHW Curriculum

• **Role of the CHW – Core Competencies (9 credit hours)**
  – Role, Advocacy and Outreach - 2
  – Organization and Resources - 1
  – Teaching and Capacity Building - 2
  – Legal and Ethical Responsibilities - 1
  – Coordination and Documentation - 1
  – Communication and Cultural Competency - 2

• **Role of the CHW – Health Promotion Competencies (3 credit hours)**

• **Role of CHW – Practice Competencies – Internship (2 credit hours)**
MN CHW Curriculum

- Currently four schools offer the certificate program:
  - Minneapolis Community and Technical College
  - Rochester Community and Technical College
  - St. Catherine University
  - Summit Academy OIC

- An online option for rural MN is in the planning stages with a pilot scheduled to begin late summer 2012
CHW Peer Network
Sponsored by Wellshare International

- Established in 2005 in follow-up to CHW focus group research commissioned by the Blue Cross Foundation identified peer support and professional growth as priorities of practicing CHWs

- Goals:
  - Improve resource sharing and information exchange among CHWs
  - Create opportunities for peer mentoring and support
  - Offer continuing education and professional development

http://www.wellshareinternational.org/chwpeernetwork
Current & Potential CHW Funding Models

Advancing CHW Practice and Utilization: The Focus on Financing
National Fund for Medical Education, Center for the Health Professions, UC-San Francisco, 2006.

- Foundation grants
- Government grants and contracts
- Medicaid & other coverage options
- Government general fund
- Private organizations
- Consumer/self-pay...no examples found
MHCP CHW Payment Legislation

- **2007 Legislation**
  - 12/19/07: Federal approval received
  - MHCP enrollment criteria:
    - CHW certificate from school offering MnSCU approved curriculum
    - Supervised by a physician/advanced practice registered nurse
    - Grandfathering provision

- **2008 Legislation**
  - 3/18/09: Federal approval of expansion of CHW supervision to the following provider types:
    - Certified public health nurses operating under the direct authority of an enrolled unit of government
    - Dentists

- **2009 Legislation**
  - Federal approval of supervision by Mental Health Professionals
Subd. 49. Community health worker. (a) Medical assistance covers the care coordination and patient education services provided by a community health worker if the community health worker has:

(1) received a certificate from the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System approved community health worker curriculum; or

(2) at least five years of supervised experience with an enrolled physician, registered nurse, advanced practice registered nurse, or dentist, or at least five years of supervised experience by a certified public health nurse operating under the direct authority of an enrolled unit of government.

Community health workers eligible for payment under clause (2) must complete the certification program by January 1, 2010, to continue to be eligible for payment.

(b) Community health workers must work under the supervision of a medical assistance enrolled physician, registered nurse, advanced practice registered nurse, or dentist, or work under the supervision of a certified public health nurse operating under the direct authority of an enrolled unit of government.

(c) Care coordination and patient education services covered under this subdivision include, but are not limited to, services relating to oral health and dental care.
Covered Services

- Signed diagnosis-related order for **patient education** in patient record
- Face-to-face services, individual and group
- Standardized education curriculum consistent with established or recognized health or dental care standards
- Document all services provided
Provider Types Authorized to Bill for CHW Services

Advanced Practice Nurses
Clinics
Critical Access Hospitals
Dentists
Family Planning Agencies
Tribal Health Facilities

Hospitals
Indian Health Services Facilities
Mental Health Professionals
Physicians
Public Health Clinic Nurses

To learn more, contact:
Will.wilson@state.mn.us
Examine CHW strategies within framework to connect housing conditions and health outcomes

- Housing quality & its role in safety and in physiological and psychological health
- Linked issues of housing affordability, residential stability and crowding
- Neighborhood and community attributes that impact health such as community design and concentration of poverty

Housing and Health: New Opportunities for Dialogue and Action. www.nchh.org
Spotlight: CHW models that connect home environments to health care

- Asthma: New England Asthma Innovations Collaborative, King County Healthy Homes Demonstration Project
- Public Housing: HUD and NHLBI partnership for Hope VI Public Housing Cardiovascular Health Initiative
- Healthy Housing: Kresge Foundation Safety Net Enhancement Initiative
CHW Models, cont

- Primary Care Access for Homeless: 8 state demonstration to integrate CHWs into FQHCs to improve quality of care for homeless individuals through outreach and care coordination under leadership of National Health Care for the Homeless Council
Potential employment sites for CHWs who address housing–related health problems

- Primary care and Health Care Home clinics
- Home visiting programs
- Local Public Health
- Affordable housing for families and seniors
- Faith-based organizations
- School-based clinics
- Social service agencies & mutual assistance associations
- Hospital community benefit programs
- Health plan initiatives
Recommendations

• **Partnerships**: Build CHW strategies into the action plan for the Alliance for Healthy Housing and Communities

• **Awareness-building**: Educate health and housing stakeholders about the CHW role and its impacts

• **Policy**: Ensure that CHW workforce is included in state plan for healthy housing and in the Workforce Work Group priority recommendations

• **Practice**: Target asthma disparities reduction as starting point for comprehensive cross-sector health and housing intervention utilizing CHWs in team approach

• **Capacity-building**: Train CHWs in healthy housing
Trends that Impact Future CHW Employment and Funding

- Move from volume-oriented payment to **pay for performance and outcomes**

- **Workforce needs** related to expanded coverage

- **Demographic shifts** with aging baby boomers and growth in populations of color
Trends, cont.

- Focus on **team-based, patient-centered care** with everyone “working at the top of their license”
- Greater recognition of **social, environmental and economic determinants of health** and use of tools such as community assessments and HIA
- Need for **proven, integrated, lower cost models**
- Increased accountability for reporting and outcomes, leading to **wider adoption of strategies that address health disparities**
Conclusion

CHW workforce strategies are an integral part of the solution to successfully addressing the challenges at the intersection of health, housing, and community development and should be included in our agenda for the Alliance for Healthy Housing and Communities.
Selected Resources

• Community Health Workers Evidence-based Models Toolbox. HRSA Office of Rural Health. 2011.


• Housing and Health: New Opportunities for Dialogue and Action. National Center for Healthy Housing, Center for Housing Policy, ChangeLab Solutions and Trust for America’s Health. [www.nchh.org](http://www.nchh.org)
More Resources

- King County WA Healthy Homes Demonstration Project
  http://www.nchh.org/Research/King-County-Healthy-Homes-Demonstration-Project.aspx

- NHLBI-HUD Partnership to improve heart health among public housing residents using CHW strategies
  http://nhlbi.altaruminstitute.net/healthdisp/results/hud-hope-VI.htm

- Training on Healthy Housing for CHWs (English and Spanish versions)
  http://www.nchh.org/Training/HealthyHomesTrainingCenter/TrainingCourses/CHW/CourseMaterials.aspx

- Wilder Research Center CHW Assessment and ROI
Q & A and Discussion

- What do you see as the opportunities and barriers for integrating CHWs into healthy housing efforts in Minnesota?
- What information or assistance would be helpful to introducing the CHW role to your organization and its work?
For more information:

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Thank you!