

# 5 Things Employers Should Know About CHW

Community Health Workers



## 1. Who Are CHWs?

CHWs are trusted members of the community, who understand and relate to the clients they serve. They are known by a variety of titles, including community health advisor, lay health worker, community health representative, promotora or promotores de salud, outreach worker and many more.

## 2. What Do They Do?

CHWs promote good health and wellness among community residents through health coaching, care coordination, navigation, advocating, connecting them to needed resources, and much more.

## 3. Who Hires CHWs?

CHWs are employed by many nonprofits, health care facilities and community-based organizations, such as acute care hospitals, physician practices, FQHCs, governmental agencies and schools.

### Basic Training for CHWs

#### CHW Core Competencies

CHW training programs teach a range of skills to prepare individuals to:

- (1) Engage and work with patients and clients and
- (2) Understand, engage and work within healthcare environments and systems.

<https://sph.uth.edu/dotAsset/28044e61-fb10-41a2-bf3b-07efa4fe56ae.pdf>

#### The principle reasons employers hire CHWs are:

- To reduce hospital readmissions
- To help patients manage chronic conditions

#### Main responsibilities reported by employers for CHW's:

- Patient Navigation
- Health Education
- Connecting patients to health and social services

## 4. Return On Investment

The use of CHWs in reducing hospital readmissions, reducing ER visits, and improving outcomes of complex care clients have all demonstrated a ROI and cost savings:

- Increased access to primary care
- Improved HCAHPS (Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems) survey scores for quality of communication between patients and providers
- Reduced likelihood of recurrent 30-day hospital readmissions among readmitted patients; and
- Improved patients' mental health and level of engagement with their health care providers.

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/1828743> and <http://chw.upenn.edu/>

## 5. Engaging the HR Process

For initial CHW hires, employers must establish a criteria for hiring that serves the employers identified needs and results in an optimal match. The following should be given careful consideration:

**Furthermore,** "Interventions by CHWs\* appear to be effective...and also cost-effective for certain health conditions, particularly when partnering with low-income, underserved, and racial and ethnic minority communities".

<https://www.wilder.org/wilder-research/research-library/community-health-workers-midwest>

- Educate Administration and Staff about CHWs and what they do before hiring
- Identify a CHW Champion
- Identify Job Description and how they will fit into the "Team"
- On-boarding – Making CHW's a part of your team
- Patient Navigation
- Health Education/ Promotion
- Connections to health and social services
- Supervision – On The Job Training and continuing education

