



CERTIFICATION OF COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

February 2019

AGENDA

Provide background on Community Health Workers (CHWs):

- Definition, scope of services
- Need/opportunity for sustained payment of CHW services

Provide background on CHW Certification

- Progress in CT to date
- Next steps
- Need for CHW support!

Community Health Workers (CHWs)

“

“The workforce with many names – Diversity is our UNITY!”

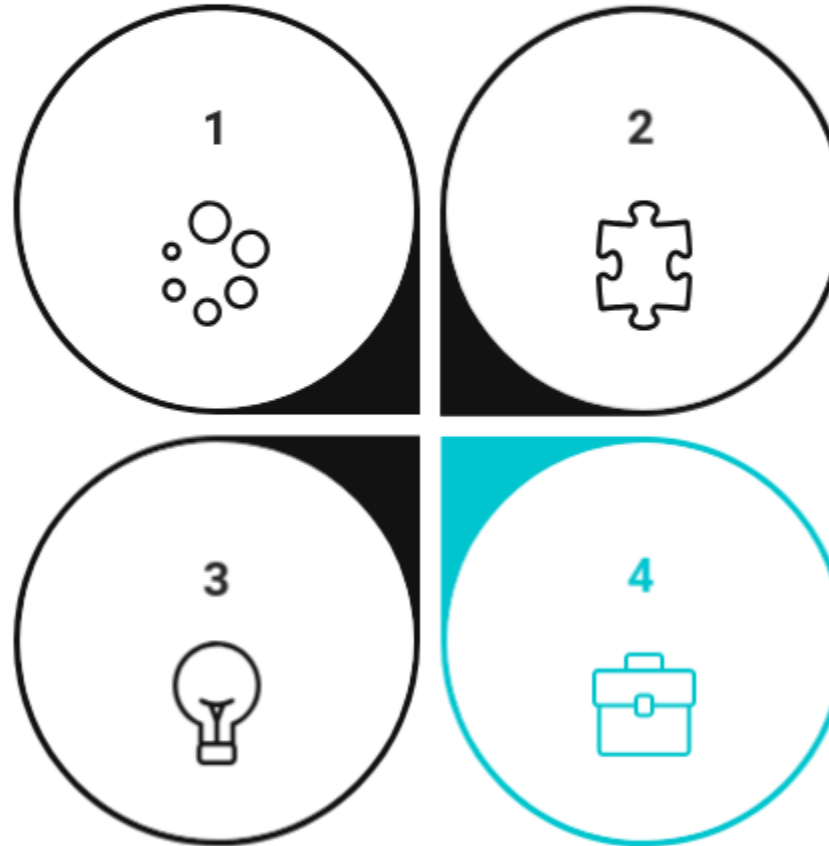
California Association of Community Health Workers

CHW SERVICES

Community health workers (CHWs) have a unique understanding of the experience, language, culture, and socioeconomic reality of the communities that they serve.

Research has shown that CHWs play an important role in improving health by helping people to:

- Keep and participate in clinical appointments
- Follow clinical guidance
- Address barriers to health that they experience in their lives - social determinants of health (SDOH).



They are in a position to make a unique contribution to improving the health of community members.

Funding for CHWs needs to be sustainable.

FUNDING FOR CHWs via GRANT SERVICES

CHW unique services are supported mostly by a patchwork of grants:



This grant funding isn't enough.



This grant funding isn't stable – some begins and ends, some has been cut and could be cut further or eliminated.

FUTURE FUNDING POSSIBILITIES

There are now opportunities for establishing CHW financing that would be sustained through health care funding.

This has happened because:

1. Research has shown the impact of CHW services, and that these services save the healthcare system money.
2. Federal regulations now make it easier for non-clinicians to do “preventive services.”
3. There are efforts in CT to put more \$ into primary healthcare and to make it easier to pay for CHWs as part of primary care.

Policy *brief*

Addressing Social Determinants of Health through Community Health Workers: A Call to Action

Hispanic Health Council

POLICY BRIEF

- Call to action
- Produced by a national team of experts led by the Hispanic Health Council
- Describes the policies and supports needed for CHWs to be able to play the important role of helping community members to address the social determinants that impact their health.
- Emphasizes that caseloads need to be reasonably low, and ongoing supportive supervision and training need to be in place.
- www.hispanichealthcouncil.org

The Challenge of Securing Sustained Funding for CHWs

Healthcare payers (Insurance, both public and private) don't want to pay for what they don't know.

- Definition of CHWs
- Scope of Services
- Standard Training, etc.

Certification of CHWs is needed to establish the above.

Current healthcare payment structure:

- Doesn't pay enough for prevention (mostly where CHW funding fits)
- Isn't flexible enough to pay for CHWs

Payment Reform is needed.

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02

CHW Certification

TIMELINE

2013

2014

2016

2019

State Innovation Model Development and Testing Grants (SIM Grant)

Promote CHWs in Primary Care Teams

CHW Advisory Committee in March 2016

Charged with developing policies to promote the CHW workforce

CHW Certification

Connecticut's First Step: CHW Definition

2017

In 2017, Connecticut passed Public Act 17-74, "An Act Concerning Community Health Workers."

The law, which ultimately became part of Public Act 18-91, Section 63, established a statewide definition and scope of work for Community Health Workers (CHWs).

Primary actors in passing legislation:

- Tekisha Dawn Everette, Health Equity Solutions
- State Innovation Model (SIM)
- SIM CHW Advisory Committee
- State of CT Department of Public Health
- Community Health Worker Association of CT

Connecticut's First Step: Defining CHWs

“Community health worker” means a public health outreach professional with an **in-depth understanding of the experience, language, culture and socioeconomic needs of the community** who:

- Serves as a liaison between individuals within the community, and health care and social services providers, to:
 - Facilitate access to those services, and to health-related resources
 - Improve the quality and cultural competence of the delivery of such services
 - Address social determinants of health with a goal toward reducing racial, ethnic, gender and socioeconomic health disparities.

Connecticut's First Step: Defining CHWs

CHWs increase health knowledge and self-sufficiency through a range of services including:

Outreach and engagement

Education, coaching, informal counseling

Social support, advocacy, care coordination

Research related to social determinants of health as well as basic screenings and assessments of any risks associated with social determinants of health.



Connecticut's Second Step: Defining CHW Scope of Practice

Roles

1. Conducting Outreach
2. Providing Culturally Appropriate Health Education & Information
3. Care Coordination, Case Management, and System Navigation
4. Providing Coaching and Social Support
5. Advocating for Individuals and Communities
6. Building Individual and Community Capacity
7. Providing Direct Service
8. Cultural Mediation among Individuals, Communities, & Health and Social Service Systems
9. Implementing Individual and Community Assessments
10. Participating in Evaluation and Research

Skills

1. Communication Skills
2. Interpersonal and Relationship-Building Skills
3. Service Coordination and Navigation Skills
4. Capacity Building Skills
5. Advocacy Skills
6. Education and Facilitation Skills
7. Individual and Community Assessment Skills
8. Outreach Skills
9. Professional Skills and Conduct
10. Evaluation and Research Skills
11. Knowledge Base

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03

Connecticut's Third Step: Building a Campaign to Pass Certification Legislation

2017

Connecticut State Innovation Model Report of the Community Health Worker Advisory Committee

Advancing the CHW workforce one step at a time.

Approved by the Healthcare Innovation Steering Committee
February 8, 2018

Connecticut's Third Step: Building a Campaign to Pass Certification Legislation

Under the direction of SIM, the CHW Advisory Committee studied the feasibility of creating a certification program for community health workers and examined the fiscal impact of implementing such a certification program.

Recommendations are summarized in the "Report to the Legislature on CHW Certification"

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ON COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER CERTIFICATION

A Report of the State Innovation Model Community Health Worker Advisory Committee

WHY IS CERTIFICATION IMPORTANT?



To establish more sustainable funding options for CHWs

(Payers) need to understand who CHWs are and what they do in order to agree to pay for their services.



To increase the visibility and recognition of the profession



To expand the use of CHWs across the state

Certification for a CHW

WOULD BE VOLUNTARY

Recommendations for Certification Requirements

1. Include requirements that make certification meaningful to employers and payers
2. Make the certification process easy to access for new CHWs and experienced CHWs, using the following strategies:

1 | Not creating barriers

2 | Make the application process simple

3 | Make it simple for references and supervisors to complete recommendations of CHWs for certification

4 | Make the process for reviewing CHW applications as simple as possible

5 | Simplify the application form: 1 page, check boxes, clear language that can be easily translated

6 | Keep the cost down

Requirements for CHW Certification

Recommendation 1:

Connecticut should establish two ongoing paths to certification:
One inclusive of formal training and one exclusive of formal training.

These 2 paths will serve individuals who are:

- currently working as CHWs
- those interested in beginning careers as CHWs

Certification for a CHW

Recommendation 1a: To be considered for one of the two CHW certification paths, applicants should meet the following requirements:



Requirements	Path #1: New CHW	Path #2: Experienced CHW
Training	90 hour training & 50 hour internship	None
Experience	1,000 hours in past 3 years	2,000 hours as paid/unpaid CHW in past 5 years
Portfolio	Optional: 3 of the 7 items on Connecticut's Portfolio List* *Adopted from Rhode Island's List	Required: A resume documenting years of experience, and a portfolio including 3 of the 7 on Connecticut's Portfolio list*

Certification for a CHW

Recommendation 2:

To be eligible to apply for CHW Certification, applicants should be at least 16 years of age.

Certification for a CHW

Recommendation 3:

A Supervisory reference and a Community reference should be required for all prospective CHWs seeking certification.

Supervisory Reference:

At least one supervisor, who has experience supervising Community Health Workers (or other staff titles who perform CHW Roles), must attest that the applicant has the required paid or volunteer hours performing at least five CHW Roles and demonstrated proficiency in at least four CHW skills (not including #11 knowledge base).

Community Reference:

A. At least one member of the community, who has known the applicant for at least 1 year, must attest that the applicant has “an in-depth understanding of the experience, language, culture and socioeconomic needs of the community.”

B. Community references are often provided by staff of partner organizations, fellow volunteers for a charity, community leaders, clients, friends or neighbors.

Certification for a CHW

Recommendation 4:

CHW certification from other states should not have reciprocity in Connecticut.

Recommendation 5:

1. Certification should be issued for three years.
2. For renewal, applicants should be required to complete 30 hours of continuing education requirements (CERs).
3. The Certifying Entity should not routinely require applicants to produce evidence of completion of CERs, but could request such documentation.

Certification for a CHW

Recommendation 6:

1. Conferences, webinars, workshops, seminars, trainings, presentations, and self-studies should count toward continuing education hours.
2. These could be tracked on a designated tracking sheet.
3. Organizations employing CHWs should consider supporting the completion of CERs through paid continuing education time.

Certification for a CHW

Recommendation 7:

Applicants for CHW certification should commit to follow a CHW 'Code of Ethics'. The 'CHW Code of Ethics' should be implemented as follows:

1. The Advisory Body should review and approve a Standard of Conduct based on those developed in other states.
2. If a CHW is alleged to have violated the code of ethics:

A. The CT Department of Public Health (DPH) should follow its established investigation, adjudication, and disciplinary proceedings.

B. The Advisory Body should be informed of such complaints and remediation efforts.

Methods & Administration of a Certification Program: Recommendation Summary

Included in a certification application, is a standardized assessment of experience, knowledge and skills, and an electronic registry.

Recommendation 8:

The Department of Public Health (DPH) should serve as the CHW Certifying Entity and be responsible for administrative tasks relating to Certification Recommendation.

Recommendation 8a: Certification and recertification fees are recommended to be as nominal as possible to reduce barriers.

Recommendation 9:

A separate Advisory Body should be established to inform the full development of Certification Standards.

Administration of a CHW Program

Recommendation 10:

1. An Advisory Body should be made up of CHW & community stakeholders and be selected by neutral appointment.
2. The CHW Association of CT should serve as the administrative lead for the Advisory Body.

Recommendation 11:

The application process for certification should not create unnecessary barriers.

CHW Training

Recommendation 12:

The training of CHWs should focus on the core skills and services as described in the CHW Consensus Project (C3) Core Competencies.

Recommendation 13:

Training programs should include 90 hours of training and an internship with a minimum of 50 hours.

Recommendation 14:

The training process should follow Adult Learning Principles, including role-playing, and be interactive.

Recommendation 15:

Training should be delivered completely or partially in-person.

CHW Training

Recommendation 16:

Instructors for CHW training should include:

1. CHWs with experience in the field
2. Non-CHWs that meet the requirements of the training vendor.

Recommendation 17:

CHWs should be assessed using:

1. Pre- and post-tests
2. Assessment of skills assessment capstone project or portfolio, or both.

Recommendation 18:

The Advisory Body should review and approve CHW training vendors

Report to the Legislature on Community Health Worker Certification

2018

The report was submitted to the legislature October 1st

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CGA Raised Bill No. 859

2019

**SB No. 859 Raised Feb. 2019:
"An Act Concerning Community Health Workers"
Development of Certification for CHWs**

Efforts to promote passage of this legislation will be led by Health Equity Solutions, in partnership with:

- Hispanic Health Council
- Southwestern AHEC
- Other interested organizations and individuals

CGA Raised Bill No. 859



General Assembly

January Session, 2019

Raised Bill No. 859

LCO No. 3696



Referred to Committee on PUBLIC HEALTH

Introduced by:
(PH)

AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 20-195sss of the general statutes is repealed and
2 the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2019*):

3 (a) As used in this section, "community health worker" means a
4 public health outreach professional with an in-depth understanding of
5 the experience, language, culture and socioeconomic needs of the
6 community who (1) serves as a liaison between individuals within the
7 community and health care and social services providers to facilitate

"Not later than January 1, 2020, the Department of Public Health shall establish a certification program for community health workers. The Commissioner of Public Health may adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, to implement the provisions of this subsection. "

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2019/TOB/s/pdf/2019SB-00859-R00-SB.PDF>

**Advocacy and Support is Needed for
CHW Advocacy!**



CONTACT US

Learn how to get involved And, learn more about CHWs



www.chwresourcesct.org



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