

**STATE OF  
CONNECTICUT  
State Innovation Model  
Community Health Worker Advisory Committee  
Meeting Summary**

Tuesday, April 23, 2019  
2:30 pm – 4:30 pm

**Location: CTBHP, 500 Enterprise Drive, Suite 3D, Litchfield Room, Rocky Hill, CT**

**Members Present:** Liza Estevez, Terry Nowakowski, Grace Damio, Tiffany Donelson, Milagrosa Seguinot

**Members on the phone:** Ashika Brinkley, Juan Carmona, Mayce Torres

**Members Absent:** Chioma Ogazi, Migdalia Belliveau, Christian Andreson, Thomas Buckley, Darcey Cobbs-Lomax, Michael Corjulo, Loretta Ebron, Peter Ellis, Linda Guzzo, Nicholas Peralta, Lauren Rosato, Robert Zavoski.

**Other Participants:** Bruce E. Gould, Meredith Ferraro, Tekisha Everette, Fernando Morales, Maggie Litwin, Terry Gerratana, Fatawu Mahama, Kelly Sanchez, SB Chattergee, Maria Millan (phone), Giselle Carlotta-McDonald (phone), Dana Robinson-Rush (phone), Dana M. Cobbs (phone), Randy Domina, Chris Andresen

**1. Call to Order and Introductions:**

Fernando Morales started the meeting @ 2:30 pm, Terry Nowakowski call the meeting to order at 2:34pm.

**2. Public Comments:**

No public comments were submitted for discussion.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

Approval of meeting minutes was postponed until a quorum is met at the next meeting.

**Purpose of the meeting:**

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the SB 859 updates so far and the role of the SIM CHW Initiative Advisory Committee moving forward.

**4. Highlight on Unity Conference**

Milagrosa (Millie) Seguinot provided the group with updates on the National Unity Conference,

which is the only national conference for and about CHWs. She attended from April 15-April 17, 2019 in Los Vegas. Millie shared that the conference was about launching the National Association of CHWs (NACHWs) and build support for the CHW workforce around the nation. Millie was selected as one of the 10 ambassadors that were appointed by the NACHW to represent CHWs in all regions across the nation. Millie represents the New England region (CT, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont). Website for the NACHWs is [www.NACHW.ORG](http://www.NACHW.ORG). Millie encouraged everyone to visit the website and check out the mission and vision. The membership fee for individuals is currently a special rate of \$20 for the first year, and as low as \$25 a year after that. Organization membership is \$150. One of the highlights from this conference also included CHW health. Materials were shared about CHW burn out and members were encouraged to share resources on ways to support CHWs as they provide services. The Department of Labor has adopted and assigned a code to the CHW definition for the CHW Workforce nationally.

### **5. Update on SB 859**

Tekisha Everette provided an update on SB 859. SB 859 was introduced earlier this year, it is a very simple bill that says by January 2020 DPH will institute a certification process without outlining what that looks like, and acknowledges the study that was done. Five co-sponsors for the bill. Tekisha Everette shared that the Public Hearing for SB 859 on March 25, 2019 was a success as there was no known oppositions to SB 859. There were 47 agencies and individuals that submitted testimonies in support of the Bill both in person and in writing. On March 29, 2019, SB 859 passed out of the public health committee on consent. This bill was referred to the Office of Legislative Research and the Office of Fiscal Analysis on April 17, 2019. It received a favorable report and was tabled for the Senate calendar on April 17, 2019. On Wednesday, April 19th, the Office of Fiscal Analysis released a fiscal note on SB 859. In sum, the note predicts it will cost a little over \$60,000 over the next two years to certify an estimated 415 CHWs. The certification process will result in indeterminate revenue gain. This means the program will ultimately pay for itself and even generate some revenue. In addition, there is negotiations around the language of the bill. The bill presented as is does not outline any details as to how CHW certification should be done in CT. DPH seems to be generally supportive, but needs clearer language. Health Equity Solutions, Office of Health Strategy, OPM, DPH to align clearer language around what certification would look like. All, except DPH agreed upon negotiated language, and fiscal analyses came out before this language was put in as an amendment. Unclear what will happen next. As written and scored, a bill that will move forward to the floor or substitute amendment that has not yet been scored (fiscal analysis). Substitute language pulls right from the report. Timeline for this Bill is not clear yet but it's moving in the right direction.

Chris Andresen, added that as it stands there wasn't enough language as to what certification would look like. Goal was to get this off the ground as soon as possible. The drafted language would allow for experienced CHWs to begin getting certified starting January 2020. With the way the language currently is, it doesn't empower us to do anything. The substitute language drafted honored the CHW certification recommendation legislative report and this would allow for the proposed date for certification start date to be actualize. More work was done on this

substitute language to give the ultimate decision-making of the CHW certification to the CHW Certification Advisory Body so that it would not just be DPH making the decisions and issuing certificates.

Terry Gerratana recommended that urge Senator Abraham's to go to appropriation and file amendment and see what that fiscal note is.

Tiffany Donelson asked if there are instances where a fiscal note exist but organizations like CT Health Foundation could cover the expenses? Tekisha Everette responded she would find out how this is actually done.

Millie Seguinot asked if CHWs were included in drafting the substitute language. Tekisha Everette responded that three CHWs were included throughout the substitute language drafting. Only change from the report was that the CHW Advisory Board would be housed in OHS rather than being housed externally. Everything else mirrored what was in the report.

#### **6. CHW Association Updates**

Millie Seguinot the President of the CHW Association of CT shared that the board of the association meeting next week and will be looking to fill positions on the board and gaining new members and renewing old members whose membership has expired. Tiffany Donelson asked about a strategic plan, Millie responded that they will first focus on building the board first and continuing building the association.

Meredith Ferraro added that DPH, WISEWOMAN Program and others has contracted with a Consulting Agency in New Haven to work with the CHW Association of CT to build its infrastructure. A survey to identify the needs of the Association and the workforce in CT is underway.

#### **7. Committee Role in Supporting CHW Advocacy and Education**

Fernando Morales asked the group for their ideas how to continue the CHW advocacy and education.

Millie Seguinot suggested the Southwestern Connecticut Agency of Aging would be a good group to reach out to. They employ Care Coordinators. They are located on 1000 Lafayette Blvd, Bridgeport, CT 06604, (203) 333-9288.

Bruce Gould suggested the Community Health centers. The Board of Directors for Community Health Centers, since they are working on CHW programs to integrate CHWs in healthcare teams.

Terry Nowakowski suggested the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative of CT could also be a great group to target. This group is planning to include CHW navigators to their team. Also mentioned the CT Hospital Association.

Grace Damio suggested group to develop a well-coordinated structure to provide the CHW certification advocacy including the media. NPR Radio did a follow up piece with the Hispanic Health Council's CHW. Would be good to have a coordinated effort to impact the media.

Christian Andresen added that the group should consider framing the advocacy language to include how organization could fit CHWs in their teams. Some pieces of CHWs program outcomes could be added to advocacy materials so that organizations would understand what they could get from CHWs.

Bruce Gould, explained that Community Health Centers Association are working on CHW programs to create workflow that include CHWs. This also includes using data to identify areas CHWs actually affect client health and connecting that back to the team to create a seamless workflow.

Liza Estevez mentioned in her work she sees how important to educate the team members about who CHWs are and what they do, and shadowing with doctors and other healthcare providers.

Meredith shared that certifying CHWs could open up opportunities for Health Professional students to shadow with CHWs in communities to learn more about community needs. These students would benefit from working with CHWs by developing their Social Determinants of Health experience and carrying that background with them as they continue their education and work as health professionals.

#### **8. Next Steps:**

- Next meeting will be in July and be more than an informational meeting
- Committee suggested to Reconvene via Webinar very soon
- Create a fact sheet on Strategies on how to educate providers and communities about CHWs
- OHS to provide a presentation on Primary Care Modernization initiative to include how CHWs are integrated in the Primary Care teams
- SWAHEC to continue CHW Certification Recommendations Engagement Conversations
- Identify the coordinator for programs like Community Care Teams in Hospitals (19 of such teams in CT, work to review individuals who use ED 7 times in 90 days), Community reentry programs to educate them about CHWs and how CHWs could fit in their teams
- Provide CHW advocacy to the Mobile Integrated Health for emergency Medical Respond team. This group is driven by ambulance companies are working to train EMS team to help people manage their health in communities they work.
- Develop strategies to go about the CHW advocacy after certification is passed.

## **9. Adjourn**

Terry Nowakowski made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:57pm.