State Health Department Support for Community Health Worker (CHW) Workforce Development and Engagement

Association of State and Territorial Health Officials Technical Assistance
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Guiding principle:
“Nothing about us without us.”
General areas of state health department support for CHW workforce development

- Leadership
- Partnerships
- Research
- Resources
- Policy & Program
Development and support for CHW leadership

- Convening stakeholders to support development of a state CHW association
- Serving on board or advisory board of state association at the behest of CHW leaders
- Mentoring of CHW leadership
- Providing technical assistance
  - Strategic planning
  - Board development
  - Policy development
  - Training
- Grant support for operations and special projects
Public promotion of CHWs by state health officials and leadership team

- Defining the role of CHWs in healthcare reform
- Engaging in national planning for public health roles (such as through ASTHO, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, CDC)
- Hosting regional health convenings or “dialogues” across the state
- Presence at CHW conferences and events
- Coordination and support from the state health officials’ office
Commitment of public health staff and resources

• Assign dedicated staffing to coordinate CHW workforce development activities:
  • Program and policy development across divisions and programs
  • Stakeholder engagement
  • Support for CHW organizing and/or association
  • Research and information dissemination
  • Partnerships

• Dedicate website to CHW resources and information
• Employ CHWs through state health department purchased services
• Employ consultants as needed

Resources
Promotion of financing, grant, and investment opportunities

- Federal contracts (such as MCH, chronic disease):
  - CDC 1305 and 1422
  - Prevention block grant, Ryan White, etc.

- Medicaid policy:
  - State plan amendments, Section 1115 waivers (Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment)

- Federal demonstration grants:
  - State Innovation Model Initiatives, Department of Labor workforce development, etc.

- Foundation grants

- Hospital community benefits funding

- Other public and private sector opportunities:
  - Direct investment by providers and employers
  - PIC and other state workforce development grants
Policy development
in collaboration with CHWs and other stakeholders

• Development and dissemination of CHW definition, scope of practice, core competencies, and training standards
• Leadership of multi-sector stakeholder engagement to explore and pursue certification and financing opportunities
• CHW workforce studies
• Adopt standard language across state health department purchased service contracts to promote quality CHW supervision and training
Mechanisms for CHW employment

• State health department direct employment:
  • State and federal funds
  • Disease-specific programs
  • Population-specific programs

• Purchased services:
  • Community-based service providers
  • CHW training programs
  • Community health centers
Examples of public health programs with CHW employment and contract opportunities:

- Chronic disease
  - Asthma
  - Cancer
  - Cardio-vascular
  - Diabetes
- Community-based primary care
- Early intervention
- Environmental health outreach and education
- Family initiatives
- Immigrant and refugee health

- Infectious disease
  - Hepatitis C
  - HIV/AIDS
  - Sexually transmitted infections
  - Tuberculosis
- Lead poisoning prevention
- Maternal and child health
- Men’s and women’s health
- Nutrition services
- Tobacco control
- Violence
  - Domestic violence
  - Sexual assault
  - Suicide
  - Youth violence
Training and curriculum development in collaboration with CHWs and other stakeholders

- Promotion of established training programs and specialized curricula
  - Currently no national training standards
  - Most CHW trainings are proprietary
  - See ASTHO’s website for trainings in the public domain

- Support of new training programs
Research and publications

• State health departments can assist with CHW workforce development through research and publication.
• Conduct a workforce study in your state
• Contribute to the development and publication of research:
  • Policy reports, issue briefs, etc.
  • Contribute to national literature and research
• Disseminate useful research to stakeholders and serve as a clearinghouse. Examples of journals:
  • Health Affairs
  • American Journal of Public Health
  • Journal of Ambulatory Care Management
Strategic partnerships

• CHW associations—state, regional, and municipal levels
• CHW training providers
• Universities and community colleges
• Health policy advocates (e.g., state APHA affiliate)
• Foundation-funded initiatives
• Healthcare providers, e.g.:
  • Community health centers
  • Hospitals
• Health plans
• Private Industry Councils
Convening and leading public-private initiatives

• Convene a CHW advisory council or other advisory groups

• Hold study groups

• Host policy development meetings and strategic planning meetings with relevant stakeholders
National networking and workforce development

- Join and engage with the APHA CHW Section
- Present at national conferences
- Network with national policy organizations
- Engage in federal agency partnerships
- Support development of the National Association of CHWs
  - Grant-funded initiative currently underway