Building a Sustainable Community Health Worker Workforce in Massachusetts

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ASTHO-Supported Primary Care and Public Health Collaborative Workforce Committee
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Overview

- CHWs as An Emerging Profession

- Policy and Workforce Development: Synergy with State and Federal Health Reform

- Certification and other Current State and Federal Initiatives
Defining Community Health Workers

- Public health workers who apply their unique understanding of the experience, language, and/or culture of the populations they serve in order to carry out one or more of the following roles:
  - Provide culturally appropriate health education, information, and outreach in community-based settings
  - Provide direct services, such as informal counseling, social support, care coordination, and health screenings
  - Advocate for individual and community needs
  - Provide cultural mediation between individuals, communities, and health and human service providers (system navigation)
  - Build individual and community capacity
  - Assure people have access to needed services
What makes CHWs unique?

- CHWs are distinguished from other health professionals because they:
  - Are hired *primarily* for their understanding of the populations and communities they serve
  - Conduct outreach a significant portion of their time
  - Have experience providing services in community settings
- Traditionally, CHWs are hired and then trained
- Need for clarity of role; competencies; scope of practice; best practices for support, supervision and integration into teams; *unique contribution*
CHW Workforce Issues

- Need for policies on training, supervision, financing, infrastructure

- Goals – Inherent Tension:
  - Promote sustainability and integration of CHWs into health care and human service delivery
  - Retain and support the grassroots nature of the profession
Massachusetts Background: The Emerging Profession

- Long term public health support for CHWs
- 1990’s: MDPH investments in CHW workforce development
  - Cross-department CHW Task Force
  - Working definition & guidelines for CHW programs
  - Convened key stakeholders
- Federal grant in 2000 to establish CHW network, study workforce, develop contract policy
Timeline 1990’s – 2000’s: Building Broad Support

- 3 CHW training programs established
- CHW leadership & organizing in MA and U.S.
- Mass. Assn. of CHWs (MACHW) founded in 2000
- Partnership with BCBS Foundation and MPHA as early health reform efforts begin – 2003 on….

- Laid the foundation for CHWs in health reform
National Markers: Emerging Profession

- APHA “New Professionals Special Primary Interest Group” (1990s) → CHW Section (2010)
- 2002 IOM Report (*Unequal Treatment*) recommends CHWs to address health disparities
- 2007 national HRSA CHW Workforce Study – MA one of 4 focus states
National Markers: Emerging Profession

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Select National CHW Policy Resources

  http://www.innovations.ahrq.gov/content.aspx?id=3744

- CDC eLearning Series:
  “Promoting Policy and Systems Change to Expand Employment of Community Health Workers (CHWs)”
  http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/pubs/chw_elearning.htm

- NGA State Policy Options: Massachusetts Case Study, 2012
  http://statepolicyoptions.nga.org/casestudy/massachusetts-develops-certification-community-health-workers
Key National Markers

- NCSL Policy Brief 2008
- Inclusion of CHWs into 2009 SCHIP reauthorization
- Inclusion of CHWs into ACA (2010) as a health profession
- Appointment of Mass. CHW to 15 seat national Health Care Workforce Commission
- National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy (2010) recommends use of CHWs
Key policy areas for comprehensive systems changes

- Sustainable **financing** for CHW services, especially in Medicaid, SCHIP and other major funding streams
- **Workforce development** resources, including training and career development
- **Occupational regulation** - standards for training and certification
- **Guidelines for common metrics in research and evaluation** related to CHWs.

Legislative Mandate to DPH: Chapter 58, Acts of 2006: Section 110

1) Convene statewide Advisory Council

2) Investigate the CHW workforce:
   - Use and funding of CHWs
   - Role in increasing access to health care
   - Role in eliminating health disparities

3) Make recommendations for a sustainable CHW program in MA - training, certification and financing

4) Report findings and recommendations to the Legislature
Key Findings

1) CHWs Increase Access to Care:
   - Through Outreach and Enrollment Grants, CHWs enrolled 164,600 individuals in subsidized plans and assisted 46,000 to retain insurance in 1st 2 years
   - CHWs link people to primary care
   - CHWs ensure the use of preventive care

2) CHWs Improve Health Care Quality:
   - Enhance communication between pts. And providers
   - Improve cultural competency
   - Improve patient satisfaction
   - Improve self-management of chronic diseases
Key Findings

3) CHWs Reduce Health Disparities:
   - Improve health among vulnerable populations
   - Address social determinants of health and strengthen communities
   - CHWs ensure the use of preventive care

4) CHWs Improve Service Delivery and Reduce Health Care Costs:
   - Reduce unnecessary use of emergency departments and hospitalizations
Recommendations for a Sustainable CHW Program: CHW Advisory Council Report

34 Recommendations in four areas:

1. Conduct a Statewide **CHW Identity Campaign**
2. Strengthen **Workforce Development**, including Training and Certification
3. Expand **Financing** Mechanisms for services and for training
4. Establish a state **Infrastructure** to Ensure Implementation of Recommendations
Strengthen Workforce Development: Training and Certification

- Stabilize current funding for training of CHWs and CHW supervisors
- Expand statewide access to training
- Establish a Board of Certification of CHWs

Rec. # 2.6 leads to Ch. 322, Acts of 2010: “An Act to Establish a Board of Certification of CHWs.”
Chapter 322, Acts of 2010

- Intent: address provider, payer, and CHW needs for workforce standards –
- “Title act” = Voluntary Certification
- 11 members, appointed by governor
- Chaired by DPH commissioner or designee
- MACHW nominates 4 members
- Also reps from CHW training, health plans, CHCs, employers, MPHA, public
- Statewide geographic representation
Developing a Program for CHW Certification

Provisions of the law:

- Education, training, experience qualifications for individual CHWs
- Standards and requirements for CHW training programs and CHW trainers
- Continuing education
- “Grand-parenting”
- Tiered practice levels
- Exam or other documentation
- Fees
- Reciprocity and complaints
Timeline 2013-2014

- Currently finalizing core competencies, with MACHW input
- Deliberating requirements for individual CHWs (including work experience and training options) and CHW training entities
- Researching assessment & documentation methods
- Fall-Winter 2013-14: Draft regulations
- Spring 2014: Public Comment
10 Core Competencies

- Outreach Methods and Strategies
- Client and Community Assessment
- Effective Communication
- Cultural Responsiveness and Mediation
- Education for Healthy Behavior Change
- Care Coordination and System Navigation
- Use of Public Health Concepts and Approaches (including Special Health Topics)
- Advocacy and Community Capacity-Building
- Documentation
- Professional Skills and Conduct
Massachusetts CHW Legislation Related to Health Reform

- Section 110, Chapter 58, Acts of 2006 (health reform)
- Chapter 322, Acts of 2010, (CHW certification board)
- Health Care Cost Containment Law – Ch. 224, Acts of 2012 (payment reform)
MA Payment Reform 2012: CHW Opportunities

- Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund - $60 million over 4 years to demonstrate that prevention works; CHWs are recommended strategy; CHW seat on PWTF Advisory Board

- Health Care Workforce Transformation Fund – Funding to train workforce in emerging models of care

- MassHealth CMS-funded Dual Eligible demonstration includes CHWs as a covered service

- Potential for CHWs in SIM (State Innovation Model) e-Referral system

- Inclusion of CHWs in multidisciplinary teams in ACOs
Current State and Federal CHW Opportunities

- MassHealth (MA Medicaid) bundled payment pilot for covering CHWs as part of pediatric asthma home visits
- **MA Attorney General’s Office** – 2012 funding for CHW training and CHW services at 4 community health centers
- **CDC** prioritizes CHWs in multiple funding opportunities for Domain 4 – Community-Clinical Linkages (CTG and Chronic Disease)
- **CDC** – Prevention Block Grant funding for CHW workforce development (**National Health Objective**: HO PHI-1 Competencies for Public Health Professionals)
Current State and Federal CHW Opportunities

- CMS Health Care Innovation Grants

- 2013 –Federal Medicaid Rule Change Effective January 2014
  - Allows Payment for Preventive Services by Non-Licensed Individuals, including CHWs
  - Requires amendment to state Medicaid plans
Resources

Office of CHWs:

Board of Certification of Community Health Workers:
www.mass.gov/eohhs/provider/licensing/occupational/community-health-workers/

Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers (MACHW):
www.machw.org

CHW Section of APHA:
www.apha.org/membergroups/sections/aphasections/chw

Rural Assistance Center CHW Toolkit:
www.raconline.org

DPH CHW Advisory Council Report:
¿Questions?

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