

Community Health Worker Medicaid Billing Uptake and Recommendations

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Louisiana Medicaid Advisory Committee

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Outline

- CHW background
- Evidence for CHW effectiveness
- CHW payment in Louisiana
- Uptake of Medicaid Billing for CHW Services
- Considerations for supporting CHWs

CHW Definition

“A Community Health Worker (CHW) is a frontline public health worker who is a **trusted member of and/or has an unusually close understanding of the community served**. This trusting relationship enables the CHW to **serve as a liaison/link/intermediary between health/social services** and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery.

CHWs also **build individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency** through a range of activities such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support and advocacy.”¹

- – American Public Health Association

CHW Job Titles

CHW is an umbrella term for non-clinical roles based on **trust**, **shared experience**

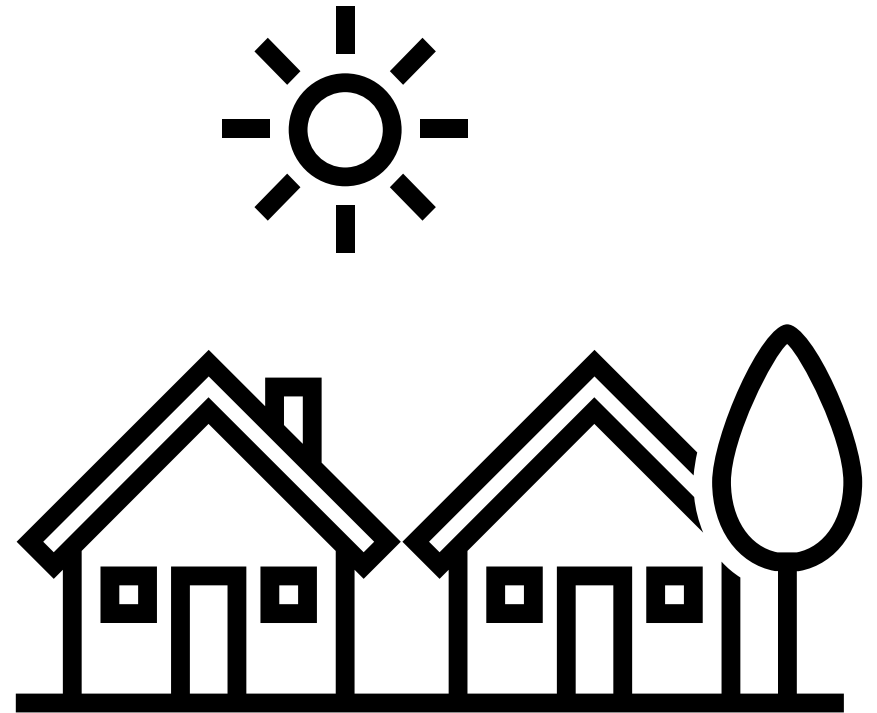
- Community health representatives/liaisons/advisers
- *Promotores de salud*
- Outreach workers/specialists
- Navigators
- Community case managers
- Etc.



Where do CHWs work?

- Health clinics (e.g. FQHCs)
- Hospitals
- Managed Care Organizations
- State & local health departments
- Universities
- Schools & Community Centers

- **Most work at community-based organizations (CBOs)**



Key points about CHW roles



10 roles Established by the National Council on CHW Core Consensus Standards²



Individual **AND** community focus

HSRN and SDOH



Cannot be carried out exclusively in clinical settings

Must have connection to other community-based programs, resources



Relational, rather than transactional

Longitudinal services, may not always align well with fee-for-service billing

Importance of CHWs

- Improve outcomes related to MCH³⁻⁶ and chronic conditions⁷
- Reduce hospitalizations & Improve patient experience⁸
- Reduce costs of care/ produce positive ROI⁹⁻¹³
 - \$138 per beneficiary per quarter¹³

Some Financing Options for CHW Positions

Challenging nationwide!

- Many positions funded by grants
 - Limited sustainability
- Medicare financing (since 2024)
 - Limited uptake so far
- Medicaid financing
 - MCOs ^{14,15}
 - Any MCO can pay CHWs through admin funds; 10 states require CHW services
 - All Louisiana MCOs have CHWs; pilot program to share CHWs
 - VBP arrangements
 - 1115 Waivers
 - SPAs for FFS reimbursement
 - **Louisiana SPAs approved in 2022**

Who qualifies for Medicaid reimbursement as a CHW in Louisiana?

CHW must:

- Have 3,000 hours of documented experience as a CHW **OR**
- Complete CHW core competency training program recognized by the Louisiana CHW Workforce Coalition/Board
 - Employer must document and verify

Louisiana Medicaid Population Eligible to Receive CHW Services

Medicaid member with:

- Diagnosis of one or more chronic health (including behavioral health) conditions; **OR**
- Documented or suspected unmet health-related social need; **OR**
- Pregnancy

Louisiana Medicaid Coverage for CHW Services

Services billed “incident to” provider (physician, PA, or APRN) with an established clinical relationship

- CHW does not need an NPI number
- Provider does not have to be present

Eligible services

1. Health promotion and coaching (includes HRSN assessment)
2. Care planning with healthcare team
3. Health system navigation and resource coordination services

Louisiana Medicaid Coverage for CHW Services

- **Billed in 30 min increments**
- **Limit:**
 - 2hrs per day per enrollee
 - 10 hours/month per enrollee
- **Services can be offered offsite (home, community) and via telehealth**

Reimbursement rate

CPT Code (# of patients)	Rate/ 30 mins
98960 (1)	\$18.11
98961 (2-4)	\$6.04
98962 (5-8)	\$2.79

FROM THE STATES

Uptake of Medicaid Billing for Community Health Worker Services in Louisiana, 2022–2023

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Author Information

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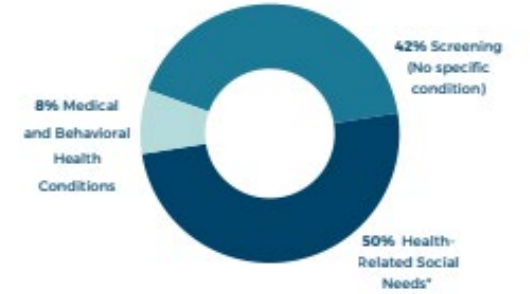
COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER SERVICES REIMBURSED BY LOUISIANA MEDICAID, 2022-2023

Community Health Workers (CHWs) collaborate with patients and healthcare teams to improve health outcomes through health promotion and coaching, care planning, and resource navigation. In 2022, Louisiana Medicaid began to allow healthcare providers to bill for some CHW services. We examined uptake of billing for CHW services from 2022 to 2023.

17,373 CHW services were paid

10,726 Medicaid members received a CHW service

Conditions addressed by CHWs

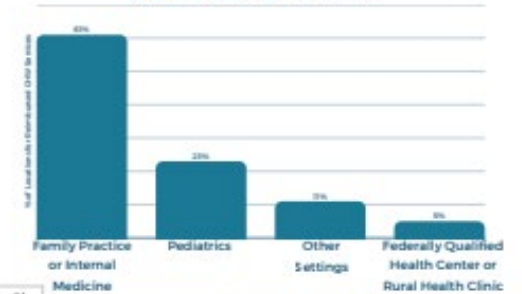


*These included assistance with housing, literacy and education, employment, family and social need, and other aid

Average number of CHW services received:
1.6

Average age of CHW service recipients:
18.6

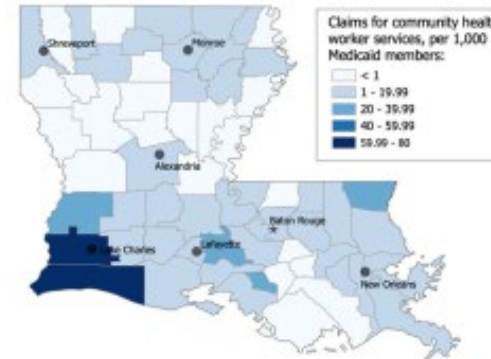
CHW Service Settings



Lessons Learned

- Challenges**
- Uptake of billing for CHW services is limited
 - CHW services are not yet reaching Medicaid members who could benefit most (e.g., older members, those with chronic conditions)
 - Members need multiple CHW contacts to achieve improved health
- Healthcare providers may need:**
- Education on designing effective CHW programs
 - Support to integrate CHWs into their workflows and bill for services
 - Higher reimbursement rates for CHW services

For more information, contact Ashley Wennerstrom at awenne@lsuhsc.edu





17,373
CHW services
were paid

**~99.97% = individual
services (CPT code 98960)**



10,726
Medicaid
members
received a
CHW service

Among ~2 million Medicaid members

Average number of CHW
services received:

1.6

Range: 1-13

SD: 1.1

Median: 1 (IQR 1-2)

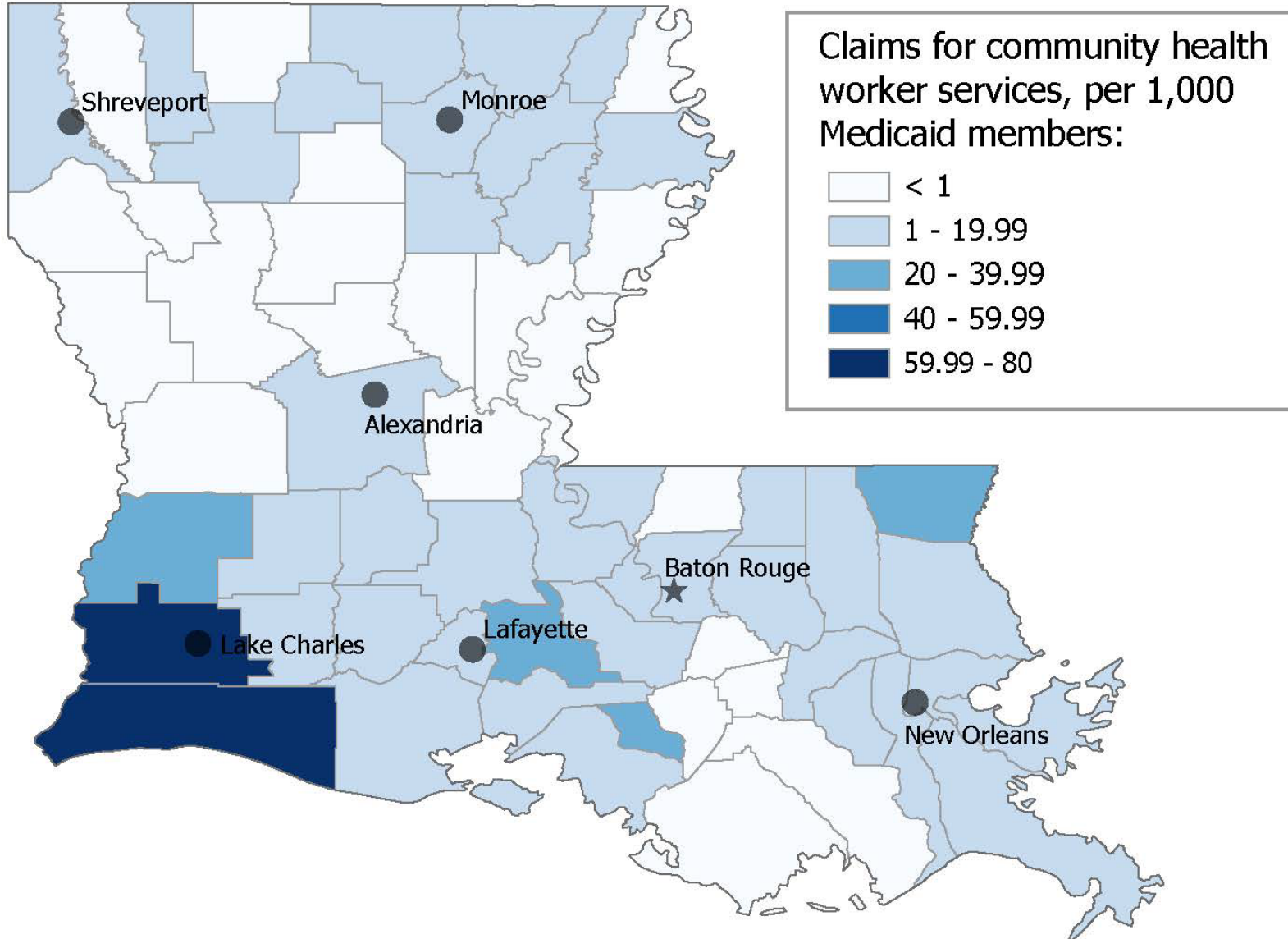
Average age of CHW service
recipients:

18.6

Range: 0-88

SD: 18.2

Median: 12 (IQR 4-30)



Primary Diagnosis

	n	%
Health-related social need	8,643	49.8
Screening encounters (no specified condition)	7,280	41.9
Medical and behavioral health conditions		
-Mental health and SUDs	280	1.6
-Obesity & overweight	251	1.4
-Diabetes	193	1.1
-CVD	108	.6
-Other condition	618	3.6
Total	17,373	100.0

Service Settings

	n	%
Family practice	10,534	60.6
Pediatrics	3,942	22.7
FQHC or RHC	947	5.5
APRN	825	4.7
Psychiatry or other mental health	628	3.6
PA	341	2.0
Hospitals and nursing homes	74	.4
Subspecialty	82	.5
Total	17,373	100.0

Qualitative Evaluation: Barriers to billing under current model

- Interviews – 10 health systems, 15 people
 - Reimbursement rate is too low
 - Providers are unfamiliar with CHW titles and roles
 - Missed opportunities for billing; CHWs not fully engaged
 - Incident-to-billing and requirement for established relationship
 - Inconsistent reimbursement from MCOs
 - EHRs are not well set-up to document CHW services
 - Health systems want to partner with CBOs that employ CHWs, but cannot easily do so
 - Need for supervisor training, CHW professional support

How can we create & finance effective CHW programs to move the needle on health outcomes?

An easy starting place: Provide resources & TA

- Provide additional billing guidance
- Ensure all MCOs provide reimbursement
- Center for Healthcare Value and Effectiveness can
 - Support provider education about CHWs
 - Community of practice for to promote CHW integration into healthcare teams

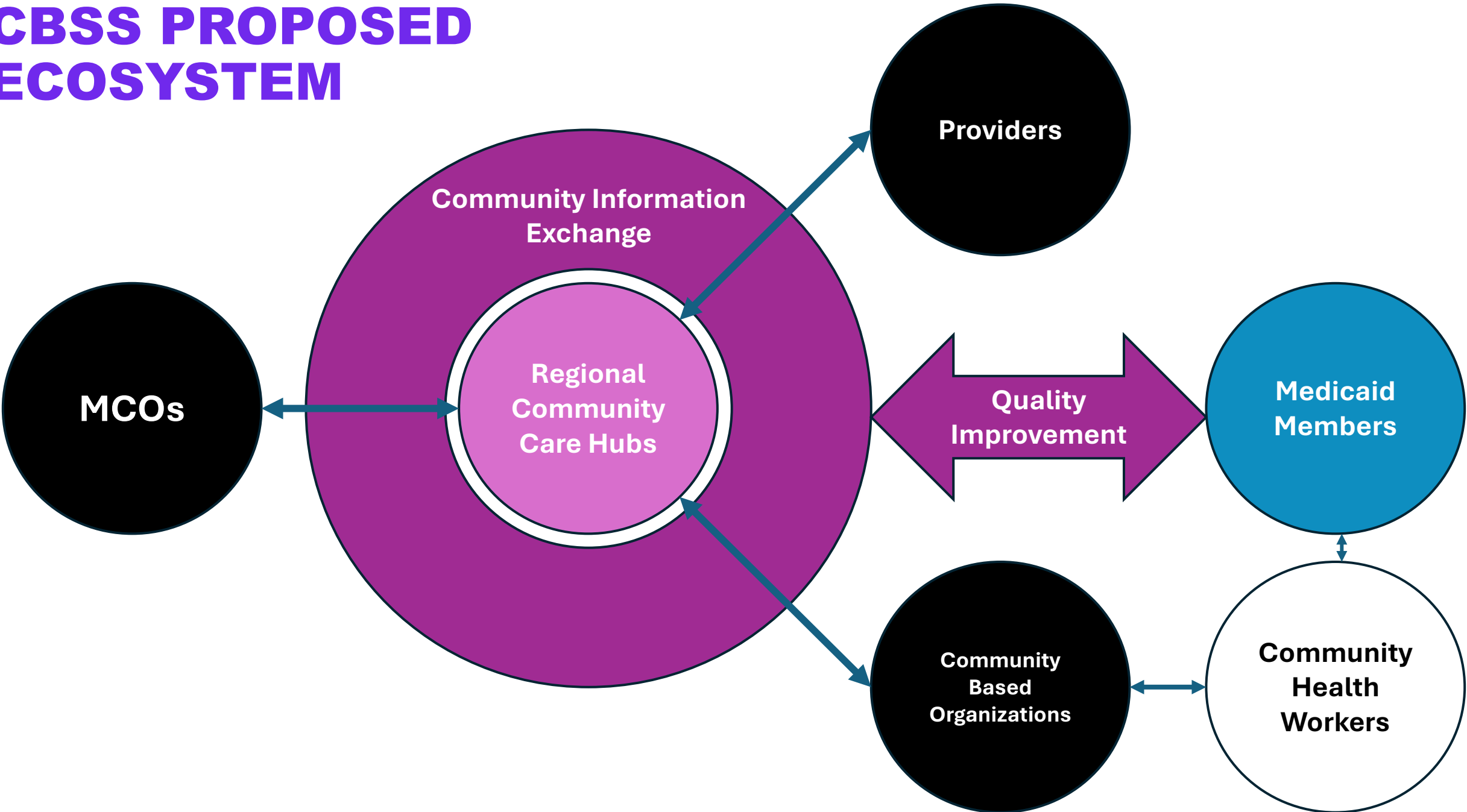
Reconsider FFS rates for CHW salaries

- Recent research
 - Estimated sustainable reimbursement rate for CHWs: \$51 / 30 minutes¹⁷
- Medicare rates
 - Community Health Integration (HCPCS codes G0019, G0022) and Principal Illness Navigation (HCPCS codes G0023, G0024)
 - ~\$80-\$84 for the first 60 minutes of service
 - ~\$50-53 for each additional 30 minutes.²⁰
- CBSS Recommendation
 - \$20/ 15 minutes
 - 40 units per member per month (same as current scenario)
- **FFS will likely never support all CHW activities**

Fund multiple CHW program models & activities, including those provided by CBOs

- CHW as member of care team
 - Initial HSRN screening **AND/OR**
 - Receive referrals from healthcare providers to provide education & coaching
- Outreach-focused
 - Locating high-risk patients & connecting to services
 - Perinatal care coordination
 - Health education, promoting screening
 - Region 3 CRC project
- Community social service navigator
 - HSRN screenings and referrals
 - Community resource development
 - Program evaluation and data sharing
 - Avoid “bridge to nowhere” problem
 - Travel time

CBSS PROPOSED ECOSYSTEM



Support CHWs at CBOs

- Consider contracts that allow CBOs to hire/fund full time CHW salaries
 - Importance of creating simple contracting
- Consider pooling funds to support CHWs who can serve any Medicaid member
- Support use of common data indicators
- Engage CHWs in program development

Help organizations create an environment for CHWs to thrive¹⁸

Hire true
CHWs

Community
connection

Appropriate
training

Positive
relationships

Supportive
supervision

Peer support

Retain & pay



A few announcements

- **2026 Louisiana CHW Workforce Survey—results forthcoming**
- **Louisiana CHW Workforce Coalition meetings**
 - 2nd Monday of the month, 1pm – Join us! Bring a CHW!
- **LACHON Monthly CHW membership meetings**
 - 2nd Friday of month, 11am
- **LACHON 14th Annual Conference**
 - Save the date November 13th
- **Possible Community of Practice on CHW Integration**
 - Keep in touch! We will keep you posted!

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Thank you!

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