Community Health Workers: Key for improving health in Louisiana

Ashley Wennerstrom, PhD, MPH
February 18, 2022
Persistent Health Inequities

- COVID-19
- Maternal mortality
- Diabetes
- Asthma
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Heart disease
- Cancer mortality (late stage detection)
- Lead exposure
## Social Determinants of Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Stability</th>
<th>Neighborhood and Physical Environment</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Community and Social Context</th>
<th>Health Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>Hunger</td>
<td>Social integration</td>
<td>Health coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Access to Healthy Options</td>
<td>Social isolation</td>
<td>Provider availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses</td>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>Support Systems</td>
<td>Linguistic and Cultural Competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt</td>
<td>Parks &amp; playgrounds</td>
<td>Vocational Training</td>
<td></td>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Bills</td>
<td>Walkability</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>ZIP code &amp; geography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Incarceration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**LSU Health Center for Healthcare Value and Equity**

**LACHON**
Louisiana Community Health Outreach Network
What’s your definition of a CHW?
CHW Definition

- American Public Health Association CHW section:

  “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...
CHW Definition

CHWs also build individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency through a range of activities:

- Outreach
- Community education
- Informal counseling
- Social support
- Advocacy²
CHW Job Titles

CHW is an umbrella term!

- Community health representatives/liaisons/advisers
- Promotores de salud
- Outreach workers/specialists
- Community health navigators
- Community case managers
- Community organizers
- And many more!
Where do CHWs work?

- State & local health departments
  - New CDC 2109 grant
- Health clinics (e.g. FQHCs)
- Hospitals
- Community-based organizations
- Universities
- Schools & Community Centers
CHW Roles and Skills
CHW Core Consensus Project Roles

1. Cultural mediation
2. Providing culturally appropriate health education
3. Care coordination, case management, and system navigation
4. Providing coaching and social support
5. Advocating for individual and community needs
CHW Roles, continued

6. Building individual and community capacity
7. Providing direct services
8. Implementing individual and community assessments
9. Conducting outreach
10. Participating in evaluation and research

\(^3\)
Evidence for CHWs
Improved Chronic Disease Management

• Improve outcomes for patients with chronic conditions
• Enhance disease prevention \(^4,5\)

• Based on extensive evidence, Community Preventive Services Task Force\(^6\) recommends CHWs for:
  
  • CVD prevention
  • Diabetes management
  • Diabetes prevention
Reduced Hospitalizations

- Individualized Management for Patient-Centered Targets (IMPaCT) Model
  - 3 primary care settings
  - 2+ chronic diseases, high poverty zip code
  - RCT
  - Goal setting + CHW support
    - Reduced hospitalizations
    - Improved patient experience of care
ROI/Reduced Health Care Costs

- New Mexico Managed Care\(^8\)
  - Lowered costs in ED, inpatient, and non-narcotics and narcotics prescriptions
- Arkansas Community Connector Program\(^9\)
  - 23.8% average reduction in annual Medicaid spending per participant
- Denver Health Outreach program\(^10\)
  - ROI of 1:2.28
- Boston Community Asthma Initiative\(^11\)
  - ROI of 1:1.37
- East Texas ED iniative\(^12\)
  - ROI ranging from 1:3 to more than 1:15
- CMMI Health Care Innovation Awards, CHW were only intervention to significantly reduce costs: $138 per beneficiary per quarter\(^13\)
Louisiana CHW Workforce Coalition

• Initially created by LA Legislature in 2019
  • Provide recommendations on expanding CHW workforce
  • **Financing CHW positions through Medicaid**
    • Developing standards for CHW training
    • Many other issues

• [LA CHW Workforce Study Committee Report](#)
Proposed CHW Service Description

1. Health promotion and coaching for individuals

2. Care planning with a beneficiary’s healthcare team as part of a team-based, person-centered approach

3. Health system navigation and resource coordination services
Eligible Population

One or more of the following:

• Diagnosis of one or more chronic health (including behavioral health) conditions;
• Documented or suspected unmet health-related social need; or
• Pregnancy.
Provider Qualifications

• Has completed state-recognized training curriculum approved by the Louisiana CHW Workforce Coalition

• Substitution of a training may be granted to an individual who has provided 3,000 hours of documented work experience as a CHW

• The supervising physician, NP, or PA must maintain documentation of CHW qualifications
Reimbursement

• Will be based on published salary information, including benefits, and administrative overhead (salary: $42,000 from the Bureau of Labor Statistics)

• This is to ensure appropriate reimbursement so that CHWs are sustainable

• Individual and group services will be allowed
Contact Information

**Ashley Wennerstrom, PhD, MPH**  
Director, Louisiana Community Health Worker Institute  
Email: awenne@lsuhsc.edu

**Catherine Haywood, BSW**  
Executive Director, LACHON  
Email: gray.catherine1949@gmail.com
References


12. Russell H, MRP Return on Investment from Employment of Community Health Workers, Journal of Ambulatory Care Management: April/June 2012 - Volume 35 - Issue 2 - p 133-137. doi: [10.1097/JAC.0b013e31822c8c26](https://doi.org/10.1097/JAC.0b013e31822c8c26)