

Louisiana Demonstration Community Health Worker Program Overview

Opportunity Summary

Louisiana Medicaid and the Center for Healthcare Value and Equity (CHVE) at the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center intends to pilot a Community Health Worker (CHW) demonstration project serving high-risk Medicaid members in a target region in Louisiana.

Overview

Louisiana Medicaid is committed to advancing evidence-based, community-engaged solutions for vulnerable residents across the state. Currently, all Louisiana Managed Care Organizations (MCO) are utilizing CHWs, but these programs are not always aligned with evidence-based practice. Louisiana Medicaid is providing an exciting opportunity to adapt the evidence-based IMPaCT CHW model¹ for a demonstration project of at least 600 patients annually in a target region in Louisiana. IMPaCT has been tested in three clinical trials and consistently shown to improve chronic health conditions, primary care access and mental health, while reducing total hospital days by 65% and generating a positive return on investment for health systems and payers. The goal for this demonstration program is to build capacity to efficiently scale CHW programs across managed care footprints in Louisiana. This project is aligned with overarching “Big Bet” goals of the Louisiana Department of Health, including:

1. **Right care, right place, right time:** helping Louisianans connect to the most appropriate care in the most appropriate setting, while reducing low value care utilization.
2. **Create a culture of continuous quality improvement** to demonstrate good stewardship of public resources.
3. Reduce incidence **of preventable infectious disease**, especially Hepatitis C and congenital syphilis.
4. **Decrease opioid addiction** through education, surveillance, prevention, and treatment.
5. **Reduce infant and maternal morbidity** and related racial disparities.

Preliminary guidance and rationale for this demonstration project is included in the accompanying Blueprint, developed by the Penn Center for Community Health Workers (PCCHW) for the Louisiana Department of Health after stakeholder consultation over the course of 2018.

Support Provided

The selected MCO will receive support and guidance from the following entities for an agreed upon period of time:

- The PCCHW, a national center of excellence for CHW research, patient care, and dissemination. The Center developed the IMPaCT model and will help the selected MCO customize the Blueprint for their organization and goals. PCCHW will provide tools, training, technology, and troubleshooting support to help this demonstration project succeed.
- The CHVE at the LSU Health Sciences Center, with specific evaluation and implementation support for this pilot from Drs. Ashley Wennerstrom and Pooja Mehta. CHVE will help adapt the IMPaCT model to Louisiana’s local context and evaluate outcomes from the demonstration project. This evaluation may be structured as a randomized controlled trial.

¹ <http://chw.upenn.edu/about/>

Please note that the selected MCO will be responsible for the operational costs of the CHW program. Personnel, equipment and infrastructure costs for full-scale CHW programs are approximately \$1,250/patient.

Information Requested

To be considered for this opportunity, MCOs shall submit answers (no more than 5 pages) to the questions below as part of the Louisiana Medicaid Managed Care Organizations Request for Proposals. If the MCO does not currently operate as an MCO in Louisiana, its responses to the questions below may reference MCO CHW experience from other states. MCOs should consider the following definition of CHWs when responding:

“A community health worker 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 worker 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.

A community health worker also builds 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.”

MCOs should also keep in mind that CHW is an umbrella job title. An MCO’s employees may be called by another name (e.g. member engagement specialist, outreach worker, etc.) but if their duties and attributes fit the description above, they are likely CHWs.

1. Why is the Proposer interested in this opportunity?
2. How many CHWs does the Proposer currently employ? In what parts of the state?
3. What is the Proposer’s CHW/member ratio?
4. What are the main activities in which the Proposer’s CHWs are currently engaged?
5. How are the Proposer’s CHWs currently trained? What are the minimum training requirements?
6. Does the Proposer have a process to ensure that its CHWs are trusted by the communities they serve? If so, please describe.
7. What data does the Proposer collect to know if its CHW program(s) is (are) working?
8. How are the Proposer’s CHWs or other care management staff integrated with providers?
9. Who is the contact person for this application?
10. Who is the lead team member who will oversee implementation?

Based on Louisiana Medicaid’s evaluation of all applicants’ responses to the questions above, it anticipates selecting one MCO to participate in the CHW pilot program.