Improving Health Equity in Our Communities by Engaging the CHW Workforce

Presented By: Martha Chavis, President/CEO
Camden Area Health Education Center (AHEC)
Director, NJ Community Health Worker Institute

For: New Jersey Public Health Association (NJPHA)
2023 Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony
The Future of New Jersey Public Health:
Maximizing Equity for Communities
Camden Area Health Education Center (AHEC)

Mission: “Improving Community Health through Education, Advocacy & Partnership.”

Vision: “Healthy Futures for All People”

CHW Trg: Since 1993, Camden AHEC has worked with over 40 public and private employers and partner organizations statewide and nationwide in the outreach, recruitment, training and retention of CHW’s as an emerging health and human services profession.

- Camden AHEC is serving as one of the lead organizations in the development and implementation of Outreach, Recruitment and Retention resources for the CLG-CHW Institute.
- Camden AHEC’s role includes assisting the CLG-CHW Employer Consortium in their employment and supervision of CHWS.
- Camden AHEC is also providing resources to the CLG-CHWI trainees and graduates to enhance and/or support core competencies training and job retention skills.
Colette Lamothe-Galette Community Health Worker Institute (CLG-CHWI)

Mission

NJDOH: Establishment of a highly skilled and trained Community Health Worker workforce to improve the health of families and communities throughout the state of New Jersey.

Thus, creating the Colette Lamothe-Galette Community Health Worker Institute.
CHW Workforce

• Community Health Workers (CHWs) have a unique understanding of and trusting relationship with the communities they serve. They serve as intermediaries and culture brokers.

• Responsibilities may include:
  • outreach
  • community education
  • patient advocacy
  • informal counseling

• Benefits: Connecting Families/Communities to needed services, decrease in health disparities that are preventable by intervention (social determinants of health), etc.

• CHW Examples: Home Health Aides, Home Visitors, Home Inspectors, Community Health Advisors, Family Resource Specialists, Health Navigators, Peer Counselors.

Presented by:
CHW Workforce by Job Title
CHW Workforce in the U.S.A.

As of 2019, NIHCM Foundation reported:

- 86,000 CHWS employed.
- 100,000 CHWS to be added by the White House.
- 640,000 CHWS needed to stop pandemic and bolster resilience & recovery.
CHW Workforce Arena

- Health Care System: Hospitals, Primary Care Providers, Specialists, Managed Care Orgs.

- Community – At Large.

- Patients/Clients – Users of the Health Care System.

- Academic Institutions/Training Programs.

- CBOs, FBOs, Civic Associations.

- Local/State Governments.
**CHW Defined:**

American Public Health Association (APHA) Definition of a Community Health Worker (CHW)

- The 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 Defined  (APHA Definition)

❑ The CHW 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.

❑ The CHW is discussed as an effective strategy in the Affordable Care Act.
The CHW Workforce is:

❖ CHWs relate to community members as peers rather than purely as clients.

❖ CHWs can achieve certain results that other professionals can’t or won’t.

❖ CHWs work to promote positive health behaviors and outcomes as a member of the health care team and as a member of the community.
The CHW Workforce is not:

❖ CHWs do not provide direct clinical care.

❖ CHWs do not generally hold other professional licenses.

❖ CHWs expertise is based on shared culture and life experience with the population(s) they serve.

❖ CHWs rely on relationships and trust more than on clinical or social service expertise.
The *emergence* of the Community Health Worker (CHW) workforce has been helped by the Affordable Health Care Act and issues related to:

- Workforce shortages among healthcare and social service providers;
- Acknowledgment of the social determinants, health care disparities and health inequities and their impact on quality of life; and
- Changes in health care financing and service delivery.
Concurrently, the CHW Workforce has also been burdened by:

- CHWs not being considered as part of the healthcare or social services team because they are not paid as a reimbursable profession and/or not employed on a consistent basis. CHWs’ are usually employed via grant funding sources.

- Reoccurring themes that have come across in the training of CHWs state that CHWs’ lack of a good job foundation. However, the latter is generally due to a poor understanding of the CHW’s role as a member of the healthcare or social services team.
Ecosystem of Community Health: The Role of Community Health Workers

Healthy People 2020
A society in which all people live long, healthy lives

Overarching Goals:
- Attain high quality, longer lives free of preventable disease, disability, injury, and premature death.
- Achieve health equity, eliminate disparities, and improve the health of all groups.
- Create social and physical environments that promote good health for all.
- Promote quality of life, healthy development and healthy behaviors across all life stages.

www.healthypeople.gov, accessed 12.30.10
Improving Health Equity in Our Communities by Engaging the CHW Workforce
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Health Ecosystem and CHWs Impact:
❖ Community Health
❖ Population Health
❖ Social Determinants
❖ Health Care Disparities
❖ Health Inequities
❖ Health Care Paradigm Shift
❖ Health Care Costs
Community Health is defined as:

*the strengthening of community-level health efforts* throughout the nation in helping communities prevent disease and promote healthy living.

CHW training and employment place special emphasis on reaching people who experience the greatest burden of death, disability, and suffering from chronic diseases.
CHWs Role & Community Health

Community Health Worker:

- Lived Experiences
- Live in the Community
- Tie to Faith-Based Organization
- Know Community members
- Access local health providers
- Boots-on-the-ground Social Network
CHWs Role and Population Health

For Richer and For Poorer:

- The US Health disadvantage cannot be fully explained by health disparities among uninsured or poor.
- Even advantaged Americans experience poorer health compared to peers in other countries.
- Social and Environmental factors are key.


Slide from: Rishi Manchanda MD MPH @RishiManchanda rishi@healthbegins.org
CHWs Role and Population Health

Community Health Worker:
- Voter/taxpayer impacting policies
- Participant of social institutions
- Member of the community
- Family/Friends Network
- Individual with know-how
CHWs Role and Social Determinants

Social Determinants involve:

- Unstable housing
- Food insecurity
- Racial discrimination
- Under or Unemployment
- Domestic Abuse
CHWs Role and Social Determinants

Community Health Worker – Liaison 2.0

* Outreach * Advocate

* Educate

* Support

* Navigate

* Interpret

* Informal Counseling

THE CHW SETTINGS CONTINUUM:

1.0 Community Setting

1.1 Community-Based & Community-Focused CHW

1.2 Community-Based & Clinically-Focused CHW (outreach)

2.0 Patient/Person-Centered & Community-Responsive Models

2.1 Clinically-Based & Community-Focused CHW (in-reach)

2.2 Clinically-Based & Clinically-Focused CHW

3.0 Clinical Setting

3.1 Clinically-Based & Community-Focused CHW

3.2 Clinically-Based & Clinically-Focused CHW

E. Lee Rosenthal, Julie St. John, Carl H. Rush, and the C3 Project Full Team, May 2017
CHWs Role and Health Care Disparities

Health Disparity Definition

A health disparity is a particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health based on their racial or ethnic group; religion; socioeconomic status; gender; age; mental health; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.

Source: Healthy People 2020

Clinical Appropriateness and Need Patient Preferences

The Operation of Health Care Systems and Legal and Regulatory Climate

Discrimination: Biases, Stereotyping, and Uncertainty

Quality of Health Care

Nonminority

Minority

Disparity

Difference

Differences, Disparities, and Discrimination: Populations With Equal Access to Health Care
CHWs Role and Health Care Disparities

Community Health Workers:

- Trusted by the community
- Resource Coordination
- Health Care Quality
- Prevention Education
- Lifestyle Changes

The Triple Aim+

- Improve Health
- Reduce Health Disparities
- Improve Care

Reduce Cost per Capita

M. Chavis Camden AHEC- NJPHA Conf. 2023
CHWs Role and Health Equity

✔ Fair and **just opportunity** for quality health care.
✔ Value all equally.
✔ Address social determinants.
✔ Address social disparities.
✔ Acknowledge racism.
✔ Eliminate unethical practices.

**What is Health Equity?**

- Equity is the absence of avoidable, unfair, or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically or by other means of stratification.  
  - World Health Organization

- The route to achieving equity will not be accomplished through treating everyone equally. It will be achieved by treating everyone justly according to their circumstances.
  - Paula Dresel, Race Matters Institute

- Research shows that problems like poverty, unemployment, low educational attainment, inadequate housing, lack of public transportation, exposure to violence, and neighborhood deterioration (social or physical) shape health and contribute to health inequities.
  - National Academy of Sciences

- Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be healthier.
  - Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

- Interaction Institute for Social Change
  Artist: Angus Maguire
CHWs Role and Health Equity

Community Health Worker:

- Service delivery strategy
- Collect data, gather information
- Input in policies, rules to improve health
CHW Role & Healthcare Paradigm Shift

Changes from:

- The old health care system -
  - Episodic care for acute problems and urgent needs of patients
  - Focus on testing, diagnosing, relieving symptoms, and finding a cure

Paradigm Shift to address:

- Affordable Care Act (ACA) focus
- Chronic diseases prevention
- Population health management

E. Perweiler, MPP, RN. Rowan U. - NJISA
CHW Role & Healthcare Paradigm *Shift*

Community Health Worker:

Determinants of Health

- Biology/genetics
- Individual behavior
- Socioeconomic status
- Environment/geographic location
- Race/ethnicity
- Religion
- Gender
- Age
- Mental health
- Cognitive, sensory or physical disability
- Sexual orientation or gender identity
New Healthcare Paradigm

- Paradigm shift towards integrated, preventive health care
  *CHWs*

- Financing systems and policies that support prevention in health care
  *CHWs*

- Equip patients with needed information, motivation, and skills in prevention and self-management
  *CHWs*

- Make prevention an element of every health care interaction
  *CHWs*

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E. Perweiler, MPP, RN. Rowan U. - NJISA
CHW Role & Healthcare Costs

Inequity in health care through cost is the result:

- Income
- Zipcode
- Prevention
- Intervention
CHWs Role and Healthcare Costs

Community Health Worker:

- Reduce fragmented care.
- Improve disease management.
- Address unhealthy behaviors.
- Promote wellness.
- Utilize health care services.
- Access technology.
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CHW Return on Investment (ROI) Example

HIV Prevention, Care and Treatment through the Eyes of Community Health Workers (CHWs)

• Stephanie Berroa-Allen, Health Educator; Charline Ganthier, Health Educator; Martha Chavis, Executive Director
Camden AHEC’s Health Equity CHW Project

• The project integrated Community-Health Workers as part of the healthcare provider team who provided psycho-social support to person(HIV+s) living with HIV/AIDS; to improve their health outcomes; and reduce their health disparities.
HIV Prevention, Care and Treatment through the Eyes of Community Health Workers (CHWs)

The Setting

- Camden AHEC is a community-based organization (CBO) located in the city of Camden, New Jersey serving Camden and Burlington Counties.

- Camden AHEC provides evidence-based programs aimed at the elimination of HIV/AIDS and improving health outcomes for marginalized and/or underserved individuals. Staff members are cross-trained as community health workers, program facilitators, and HIV counselors and testers.
HIV Prevention, Care and Treatment through the Eyes of Community Health Workers (CHWs)

The Clients

- Identified individuals living with HIV
- Linked newly diagnosed individuals to care
- Assisted in removing barriers to care
- Provided group and one-on-one coaching sessions
- Conducted prevention strategies leading to a healthier lifestyle
- Facilitated activities for community building and social integration
### The Results

(n = 55)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Behaviors</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In School</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attend Social Group Sessions</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved with Family</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viral Load is Lower from Intake</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
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HIV Prevention, Care and Treatment through the Eyes of Community Health Workers (CHWs)

The Results

- The following chart describes the distribution of social behaviors of those enrolled in the Psycho-Social Support Services Program.
HIV Prevention, Care and Treatment through the Eyes of Community Health Workers (CHWs)

The Lessons Learned

Clients were able to reduce their:

• Self-stigmatization.

• Unfamiliarity with resources.

• Inconsistent contact with primary care providers.

Clients were able to increase their:

• Engagement in their own care and treatment.

• Develop a comfort level with carrying on with their lives with minimal daily burden.
HIV Prevention, Care and Treatment through the Eyes of Community Health Workers (CHWs)

The Lessons Learned

CHWs were able to:

• Understand social indicators of health outcomes.
• Foster interpersonal connections with individuals in the community.
• Utilize hands-on applications of specialized trainings.
• Address non-clinical barriers affected by HIV+ status.
• Facilitate community-building workshops to strengthen individual identities.
HIV Prevention, Care and Treatment through the Eyes of Community Health Workers (CHWs)

The Lessons Learned

Ecosystem of Community Health impact:

• Optimal utilization of primary health care.

• Client compliance resulting in HIV being treated as a chronic disease.

• Client re-engagement in the community as employees and individuals involved with their families and neighbors.

• Client’s zipcode, income, intervention & prevention resources positively influenced.
HIV Prevention, Care and Treatment through the Eyes of Community Health Workers (CHWs)
Stephanie Berroa-Allen, Health Educator; Charline Ganthier, Health Educator; Martha Chavis, Executive Director

Purpose
To integrate Community-Health Workers as part of the healthcare provider team who will provide psycho-social support to persons living with HIV/AIDS; to improve health outcomes; and reduce health disparities.

Project
- Identify individuals living with HIV
- Link newly diagnosed individuals to care
- Assist in removing barriers to care
- Provide group and one-on-one coaching sessions
- Conduct prevention strategies leading to a healthier lifestyle
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CHWs are able to:
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Total Clients N=55

Lesson Learned
Clients are able to reduce:
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Clients are able to increase:
- Engagement in their own care and treatment
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Improving Health Equity in Our Communities by Engaging the CHW Workforce

✔ CHWs are key stakeholders.

✔ CHWs are likely to have experienced health disparities.

✔ CHWs have a helping professional attitude.

✔ CHWs are respected in their communities.
Improving Health Equity in Our Communities by Engaging the CHW Workforce

Must acknowledge and understand that:

✔ CHWs can *navigate* the health care system.

✔ CHWs are *valuable* employees.

✔ CHWs can *impact* the quality and cost of health care.
Improving Health Equity in Our Communities by Engaging the CHW Workforce

To optimize the role, impact and value of CHWs – Employers & Academia

Must acknowledge and understand that

✔ CHWs are not the panacea of health care of being all things to all people all of the time.

✔ CHWs are not the deliverers of health care and the standard bearers of care as eliminators of the social determinants of health.
Improving Health Equity in Our Communities by Engaging the CHW Workforce

To optimize the role, impact and value of CHWs – Employers & Academia

Must acknowledge and understand that

✔ CHWs are **not** want-a-be health care professionals operating outside of their ‘Essential 8’ Competency Skills.

✔ CHWs are **not** community rulers or rulers in their communities.
Improving Health Equity in Our Communities by Engaging the CHW Workforce

Academia & Employers must:

• Review, comment and adopt occupational standards for CHWs.

• Recognize and utilize the CHW core competencies in both clinical and non-clinical workplace settings.

• Resolve the CHW credentialing preferences as a result of the collaborative interaction of all of the stakeholders.
Improving Health Equity in Our Communities by Engaging the CHW Workforce

Recognize the Identity of CHWs via:

• Communication
• Marketing
• Branding
• Campaigning

• Health Insurance Plans as a reimbursable provider service
Improving Health Equity in Our Communities by Engaging the CHW Workforce

CHW Workforce Development must include:

• Employer training about CHWs.

• CHW skills training curriculum for incumbent workers and new hires.

• Staff development workshops for CHWs.

• Career ladder for CHWs.
Improving Health Equity in Our Communities by Engaging the CHW Workforce

Impact of CHWs on the Changing Healthcare Paradigm will result in:

- Positive impact on health care disparities.

- Influence on the establishment and implementation of health care practices that will lead to sustainable healthy living outcomes.

- Promotion of quality of life and health wellness programs.

- User-friendly access and use of the health care system.
Improving Health Equity in Our Communities by Engaging the CHW Workforce

CHWS will benefit all aspects of Health Equity if they are included in:
Improving Health Equity in Our Communities by Engaging the CHW Workforce

Questions?

Comments?
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