



Community Health Worker Association of Rhode Island

Presenting at “Community Health Workers in
Connecticut” Meeting
September 13, 2012

CHWARI

- **VISION:** All Rhode Island communities receive high quality, equitable health services in order to achieve their optimal state of health & well-being.
- **MISSION:** Increase the capacity, recognition and effectiveness of Rhode Island's Community Health Workers to promote health equity, reduce disparities, and increase access to high quality health services.



Forming the Association

- In 2008, a group of agencies came together to help plan a training session for Community Health Workers. Attendance was so high, and feedback so positive, the group reconvened and planned a one-day conference several months later to follow up. Participants were then surveyed about their level of interest in additional professional development, and areas of need.
- The original planning committee evolved into a special interest group, due to feedback from the two conference sessions, which indicated a need and desire for the development of an association or organized workforce. This planning committee eventually became the Community Health Worker Association of Rhode Island



The need in Rhode Island

- According to a 2009 report released by the RI Department of Labor and Training, there are more than 3,300 self-identified or employer-identified Community Health Workers in the state.
- There are more than 350 CHWs and CHW supervisors subscribed to the CHWARI email list for training opportunities and communications.
- Healthcare is the biggest industry in Rhode Island.
- From evaluation forms and informal surveys, Community Health Workers have expressed strong interest in and need for professional development and workforce unification.



Timeline

- 2008: First CHW training session in Rhode Island took place – was so over-attended people were turned away due to capacity issues. This led to second training session, and all-day conference sponsored by members of the planning committee. This session was also well-attended, and produced strong positive feedback supporting the formation of a network or association.
- 2009: The planning committee begins to meet regularly to organize another training session and survey the needs of the CHWs in Rhode Island. A mission and vision statement is created. RI Department of Labor and Training issues a workforce report, reinforcing the need for support of the large (and growing) CHW workforce in RI. The planning committee begins to review other states' core competency training programs and offerings, toward a program of its own.
- 2010: A curriculum outline is developed, a full-time Manager is hired, and a fiscal agent is contracted to manage the financial and human resource needs of CHWARI.



Timeline

- 2011: CHWARI underwent strategic planning, developed goals for a longer term plan, held professional development training sessions, held formal launch event to debut the Association.
- 2012: CHWARI implemented a paid membership structure for people and organizations to join and receive discounts for training, priority seating in the core competency course, access to the forthcoming “members only” section of the website, and other benefits. Also, the curriculum was developed from the original outline, and the pilot classes are taking place this fall. CHWARI has begun several new partnerships to deliver the curriculum.



Formalizing the Association

- Identifying potential fiscal agents
- Selecting a fiscal agent
- Securing funding for operation and salary
- Choosing a location
- Hiring a manager/director/coordinator
- Getting “buy-in” from active partners to participate in ongoing Steering Committee and subcommittee activities
- Undergoing strategic planning & identifying programmatic goals

Partners & Steering Committee

- Initial partners: At the 2008 training sessions, regional trailblazers were invited to speak, such as Lisa Renee Holderby and Durrell Fox of Massachusetts. Other initial partners included the Rhode Island Area Health Education Centers, Lifespan, Neighborhood Health Plan, and the Rhode Island Department of Health (various programs, including minority health and maternal/child health)
- Present Steering Committee members include: HEALTH, Dorcas Place, Neighborhood Health Plan of RI, Lifespan Community Services, Welcome Back Center Program, Community College of Rhode Island, Green & Healthy Homes Initiative,
- Subcommittees: marketing, curriculum development, executive, event planning
- Staff & volunteers: Manager, rotating student volunteers
- Host agency arrangement: fiscal and host agreement with RI Parent Information Network



CHWARI in 2012

- Curriculum
 - Development process
 - Pilots
 - Modules
- Professional Development
 - Past offerings
 - Positive Feedback
- Networking
 - 2011 Launch
 - Quarterly meetings
- Partnership projects
 - Welcome Back Center
 - RI Parent Information Network
- Newsletter, website
 - 350+ on mailing list
 - Membership page on site
- Representing RI's CHWs
 - Members eligible for scholarship
 - New Orleans
 - New England
 - DC (APHA)



CHWARI in 2012

- Needs assessment
- Supervisor training
- CCWC
 - reimbursement
- Welcome back center
- Paid membership
 - Three paid sponsor level & two in talks
 - Promoting through Steering Committee outreach
- Apprenticeship
- Higher education
- Promoting Association, CHW workforce, CHW nationally accepted terminology & competencies
- Working w the PHTC, CT
- New England Regional Workgroup



CHWARI

Beth Lamarre, Manager

Community Health Worker Association of
Rhode Island

1210 Pontiac Avenue

Cranston, RI 02920

(401) 270-0101, ext 149

chwassociationri@gmail.com

www.chwassociationri.org